

FREE

# Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk March 8, 2015

WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Mid edition No 650



London and South of England Media Awards

## ROADS

### Return of the pothole

Our roads are once again falling into disrepair

## EDUCATION

### Failing academy to be merged

Parents fume as £30m school finally crumbles

## HISTORY

### Feeding time at Maidstone Zoo

Remembering the lions and stars of county town park

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## Academy merger needs community to unite too

WHEN the Marlowe Academy opened its doors in Ramsgate back in 2005, there was a wave of optimism and excitement about how this modern, well supported school was going to transform the future of thousands of children.

Ten years later, that dream has died after it was revealed this week it was to merge with the neighbouring Ellington and Hereson School.

Quite why it struggled to engage with the community will depend on who you speak to. In the end, the demand was simply so low for places it became financially unviable.

But amid the claims and counterclaims, we must be sure never to lose sight of the students for whom the Marlowe was their school. Where all those important memories of a key part of your life will be forever centred.

While the word 'failure' is applied



Editor **Chris Britcher**

to the mechanics and methods of the Marlowe, we must be very careful not to label the students in a similar manner. If anything, they have been failed.

Just as important, is that the parents of the school it is merging with do not create a culture of 'us' and 'them' which can pervade schools in such situations and ensure rather than a gradual integration, division lines are drawn and labels are forever attached. It is at times like this the community must unite and draw strength from a mutual desire to see the institution succeed.

The Marlowe's failure proves you simply cannot hurl money at a school and expect results. It is about creating the right community inside and outside its walls. With parents having an equal responsibility to work for the greater good. You can read much more about this inside. Have a good weekend.

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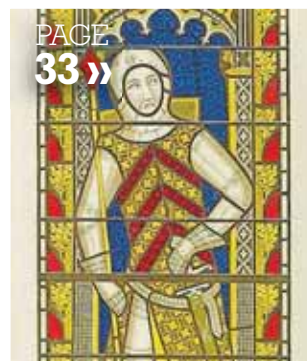
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## Anger builds over funds for garden city growth

By Sarah Linney

sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

THE leader of Gravesham Borough Council has slammed progress on the Ebbsfleet Garden City claiming it is being slowed by a lack of contributions towards building the necessary supporting infrastructure.

Chancellor George Osborne announced plans to support a 15,000-strong home garden city close to Gravesend last March - designed to finally see development in the Ebbsfleet Valley after several aborted attempts.

The first 150 homes are already under construction and a deal was agreed this week which will see work begin in the autumn on a further 170.

But John Burden, leader of the Labour-controlled local authority, says progress is proving too slow because neither developers or the Government are stumping up the cash to build the necessary facilities. This comes despite plans announced by Persimmon Homes to build a primary school to accompany its development later this year.

CLr Burden told KoS: "It is not full steam. To unlock some of the issues is perhaps more complicated than people think.



**FUTURE:** How the new garden city will look after development of the Ebbsfleet Valley

"The development at Springhead Park in Northfleet is at a standstill because we are waiting to resolve an issue between the landowner, the developers and the government.

"There is a need for a school and a bridge to link the development to Ebbsfleet station, and there is a debate going on as to whether the developer can afford to do that."

But he says that if the developers don't build the facilities, then all sorts of other problems ensue.

"There is a reluctance among developers to build anything that they don't need to.

"But if they don't build these things, local people will have to pay more rates to put the infrastructure in.

"It is not always the developers' fault. They have banks they have to answer to - they can't go bankrupt. They are building at risk.

"If we want them to clear up

brownfield sites, the government has to put some money into this to make it happen.

"Some governments in Europe invest heavily in housing and infrastructure and we haven't really been doing that."

However, housing minister Brandon Lewis insists the Government support for such projects is there - confirming earlier this week an investment of some £200m of infrastructure funding.

## Chaos at London Bridge prompts union to warn of major safety threat

RAIL union the RMT has demanded urgent action after Kent commuters at London Bridge were caught up in what it describes as "life threatening chaos" this week.

Problems with some services out of the busy terminal on Tuesday night - sparked after someone was hit by a train at Streatham Common - caused a huge jam of passengers flooding into the station.

Network Rail was forced to turn off power to lines for some 45 minutes to prevent further harm to the victim.

With extensive work already taking place around the terminal as part of a huge refurbishment of the station, many commuters found themselves penned in as ticket barriers were closed to prevent further chaos.

It forced many to then hurdle or crawl under the barriers to escape as police were called to help ease the situation. The RMT described the scenes as "horrific".

General secretary Mick Cash said:

"RMT is sick and tired of the excuses about the continuing chaos at London Bridge which led to horrific scenes at the station on Tuesday.

"The fragmentation and privatisation of our railways leaves train companies and Network Rail blaming each other while passengers and staff are left caught in the kind of life threatening chaos we have seen in pictures from one of London's major rail terminals.

"The bottom line is that we are trying to cram more and more passengers into a transport system which is already at bursting point and where the pressure is on to cut more corners and axe more staff in the drive for profit.

"It doesn't take a genius to work out that the poisonous cocktail of surging demand against a background of cuts leads to the kind of horrendous meltdown played out at London Bridge."

Network Rail apologised for the disruption caused.

## Scarlet fever fears grow as flurry of cases are reported

PARENTS are being warned to be on alert for scarlet fever after confirmed cases at three Kent schools this week.

Sutton Valence Primary School confirmed two of its pupils had the illness, just days after St George's Primary in Minster, on Sheppey, said a child there had been diagnosed with the bacterial illness too. Tiger Primary in Maidstone also had a

case. There are also suspected cases at Swalecliffe Community Primary near Whitstable.

Once fatal, today its impact is normally mild and it responds to antibiotics. It is highly contagious however. Symptoms include a fine pink rash, high temperature, flushed face and a red, swollen tongue. If you are concerned, call NHS Choices on 111.

## Operation cracks down on dangerous foreign fugitives

ONE of the most dangerous foreign fugitives could be hiding out in Kent, it was revealed this week.

Janusz Kedziora, 28, is a Polish national wanted for actual bodily harm, criminal damage, attempted robbery and burglary. He has 10 years' imprisonment to serve for a string of violent robberies and other offences in his home country.

Kedziora is known to have links

to Maidstone.

It comes as Crimestoppers, alongside the Met Police, launched Operation Sunfire, a national appeal to hunt down 17 'high-risk' offenders.

Det Sgt Peter Rance leading the operation said: "We believe that these people are dangerous, so taking them out of our communities and putting them before the courts is of paramount importance."



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## Jail for 'dangerous' rapist of vulnerable girl

A VILE sex beast who systematically raped a young girl over a six year period has been sentenced to 20 years in jail.

Michael Kay, aged 33, of Gordon Road, Chatham, was sentenced this week at Maidstone Crown Court.

He had denied two counts of rape and five counts of sexual activity with a child.

He first attacked his victim when she was in Year 6 at

school, aged ten. The abuse continued until she was 16.

Det Sgt Dan Smith said: "Kay is clearly a dangerous and calculating individual who had absolutely no regard for what he was putting his young victim through. The length of his sentence should send a clear message to perpetrators of sexual abuse; we will track you down and bring you to justice."



TV: Jeremy Clarkson at Lydden Hill

## Top Gear team at Lydden for tonight's show

RACE track Lydden Hill will be one of the star turns on this weekend's episode of hit BBC TV show Top Gear.

The track, in Wootton, near Dover, saw all three of the programme's presenters attend - James May, Richard Hammond and motor mouth Jeremy Clarkson.

Viewers will see Mr May throw down the gauntlet to a number of racers from the FIA World Rallycross Championship to take them on at the popular circuit.

Mr Hammond and Mr Clarkson were trackside during the race to see if Mr May - dubbed Captain Slow on the show - could challenge the racers in vehicles which have faster 0-60mph acceleration than a Formula One car.

Top Gear is certainly no stranger to the track, having filmed there on numerous occasions in the past. And the publicity it offers is immense. It is estimated around 170 different countries beam the show each week, with a total global audience of some 350 million.

Lydden regularly attracts a huge crowd for Britain's only round of the FIA World Rallycross Championship, which this year takes place over the bank holiday weekend of May 23-24.

Top Gear is aired at 8pm tonight (Sunday) on BBC2.

## College's £10m scheme to rejuvenate town centre takes first step forward

By Jamie Weir

Picture by

ASHFORD College has taken the first step towards an ambitious £9.8 million redevelopment of its run down town centre buildings on the edge of Ashford ring road - four years after initial plans collapsed.

In its former guise of K College, the further education site had planned to move to the town centre Ashford Learning Campus which it hoped would open by 2011.

It would have seen the college's buildings on Elwick Road - one of the highest profile sites in the town as it faces the international rail terminal - replaced by a shiny new modern building.

But when the college slumped into a financial crisis, the plans were shelved. Now, though, under the management of the Hadlow Group, Ashford College - formerly South Kent College - is looking to revive the plans - swelled by securing £9.8m from the South East Local Economic Partnership.



AMBITIOUS: How it could look

It is seen as a key cog in transforming the future of Ashford's town centre.

An application has been lodged with the council to clear the site in

order for work to begin.

Paul Hannan, Hadlow Group CEO, told KoS: "The reality of building a 'state of the art' campus means that the town will have the opportunity to deliver high class education and training in an excellent new resource. We look forward to a bright future for Ashford College and the town."

Ashford Borough Council welcomed the move. Council leader Gerry Clarkson said: "A highly skilled local workforce is vital for the success of our versatile economic growth. Having our own first class education and skills provision within the town will play a key part in our future prosperity."

"This new college will help to put Ashford on the map, which is why the council recently agreed to provide funding support to this important project, and we cannot wait to see it come to fruition."

A deal to buy its Jemmett Road site has already been agreed with a housing developer.

## Arts Council's £400k boost to museums

THREE of the county's top museums have received a funding boost after being awarded more than £400,000 by the Arts Council's Museum Resilience Fund.

Chatham Historic Dockyard, Folkestone Town Council and the Guildhall Museum in Rochester are all getting a share of the cash.

The fund supports museums across the country by helping them become more sustainable and resilient businesses.

The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust was awarded £263,000 to help fund a partnership project it will lead working with local schools.

Folkestone Town Council received £80,000 for Folkestone Museum to become self sufficient, while the Guildhall Museum got £67,100 for a bespoke training curriculum to help staff.

Hedley Swain, from Arts Council England, said: "They have all put forward interesting plans to develop their organisations and support their long-term resilience."

## Claire Tiltman case on BBC's Crimewatch

THE long-running investigation into the brutal murder of Greenhithe school girl Claire Tiltman was featured in the BBC's Crimewatch this week.

Killed close to her home in 1993 as she went to visit a friend, it was only in December that her killer - Colin Ash-Smith - was brought to justice.

The BBC show looked at the long-running battle to keep the case alive and the vital breakthroughs and change in law which allowed them to finally bring a case.

Among those featured on the show were old school friends of the 16-year-old. They had sought to keep her in the public eye and arranged a memorial walk to mark the 20th anniversary of her death.

They spoke about the Claire they knew and how her death had "changed everything".

Both Claire's parents died before seeing justice for their daughter.

Ash-Smith, 46, already serving life sentences for attacks on two other women, was found guilty and told to spend a minimum of 21 years in prison before being eligible for parole for Claire's murder.

## Protests turn ugly at Ukip conference

PROTESTORS clashed outside Margate's Winter Gardens last weekend as the Ukip spring conference drew to an end.

Police say about 250 people took part in an anti-Ukip march, which was organised by Thanet Stand Up To UKIP, from the town's railway station to the conference venue.

It is believed one woman was arrested on suspicion of common assault.

There are not thought to have been any injuries.

The march included protesters from Ipswich, Cambridge and London and was in response, say its organisers, to the rise of Ukip in Thanet which "will lead to an increase of prejudice and bigotry".

Ukip leader Nigel Farage, who denied claims of ill health at the event, is standing for the seat of South Thanet at the upcoming election.

It is currently held by Conservative Laura Sandys who is standing down in May.

It has been hinted that should he fail to win the seat, Mr Farage may be forced to step down as leader.



# agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

## Town set to warmly welcome pregnant Kate

BIG crowds are set to flock to the streets of Margate this week as the Duchess of Cambridge comes to town.

The royal visitor is making one of her last public appearances before giving birth to her second child.

The Duchess will visit the Turner Contemporary art gallery on Wednesday where she will visit the

Self: Image and Identity exhibition.

Following that, she will visit the Resort Studios in nearby Cliftonville where she will view the work of local artists.

A keen art fan, Kate has a degree in the history of art from St Andrew's University.

It will be her first visit to Kent for



three years. She last came to the county in 2012 when she visited a special youth project in Wrotham. Full pictures of the visit will be in next week's Kent on Sunday.

## Memorial benches set to be unveiled in Dartford

TWO memorial benches are to be installed in Dartford's Central Park as a tribute to those who gave their lives in war and to honour the courage of the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

Hundreds of people have pledged their support for the benches on a webpage set up by

the council.

The benches will be placed in the Garden of Remembrance by the war memorial and will be unveiled on Wednesday at 11am by the Dartford mayor Avtar Sandhu and council leader Jeremy Kite.

All are welcome at the unveiling.

## ...also

### Election briefing session

PROSPECTIVE parliamentary candidates in Ashford will attend a special briefing meeting at the borough's council chamber on Wednesday.

It will cover how to ensure all forms are completed ahead of the May elections.

### Sign up for coastal 10k

ENTRIES are now open for the annual Folkestone Coastal 10k which this year takes place on May 31.

Last year 700 people took part, raising some £40,000 for good causes.

See [www.folkestonecoastal10k.co.uk](http://www.folkestonecoastal10k.co.uk).

### Academy merger talks

PARENT information meetings get under way this week at the Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate after it was announced this week it was to merge with a neighbouring school.

For full details, turn to page 14.

### Trains get extended

TRAIN services on some routes will change from today (Sunday) as Southeastern looks to change its services to best serve customers heading into London.

Some 14 services will be lengthened and seven make additional stops.

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# Hubble: Providing a window to the wonder of our universe

**Molly Kersey** speaks to local astronomy groups on the impact of Nasa's telescope

**I**T HAS seen comet pieces crashing into the atmosphere above Jupiter, witnessed both the birth and death of stars and caught a glimpse of galaxies that are billions of light years away.

What's more, it has sent back some of the most awe-inspiring images of the universe which have given scientists an incredible insight into what lies beyond our galaxy.

Now the Hubble Space Telescope marks 25 years since it was launched into space by Nasa – carried on the shuttle Discovery which blasted off on April 24, 1990 – its launch delayed by years due to the Challenger disaster of 1986.

And its impact has been immense – for both Nasa scientists and those fascinated by what lurks in endless deep space.

Phillip Young, of the South East Kent Astronomical Society, said: "It's had a fantastic impact. It's told us so much more. Amateurs can do a certain amount, professionals on Earth with telescopes can do a certain amount, but what they can't do is cut out the atmosphere and Hubble is doing that."

As a result of being above Earth's

atmosphere, Hubble is able to see space better than even the most powerful telescopes on Earth.

And the results are incredible.

"I think the pictures are wonderful," added Mr Young.

"There's one of the Andromeda Galaxy, giving more detail than has ever been seen."

Named after astronomer Edwin Hubble, the telescope is about the size of a small bus and it weighs as much as two adult elephants.

It travels around Earth at some five miles per second capturing the pictures that have inspired awe across the world.

They start out as shades of black and white, before colours are added in to show how an object might look to the human eye.

Capturing space in incredible detail, it has provided many of us with a view we couldn't have imagined previously.

George Ward, of the Thanet Astronomy Group, agrees.

He said: "The main advantage is the fact that it doesn't have to look through the earth's atmosphere, so you get a much more crystal clear view and you can see further.



**VIEWS:** The Hubble telescope in orbit above the Earth, the picture taken in 2009 by crew of the space shuttle Atlantis... from here it can take images of our universe from outside our atmosphere. Credit: NASA.

"It's given us a view of things that we just really didn't know were there. There were thousands of galaxies that we didn't know about, so it has expanded our knowledge greatly."

Jason Hall, of the Ashford Astronomical Society, added: "For many years it was the only thing that could do that reliably. It will always be valuable."

Hubble has made a number of ex-

citing discoveries, including assisting scientists in estimating the age and size of the universe.

They now think it is some 13 or 14 billion years old.



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**STUNNING:** The Eagle Nebula- a cloud of gas and dust where stars are being born - some 7,000 light years away in the constellation Serpens. Credit: NASA, ESA, and Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)



**COLLAPSE:** A star forming region in the galaxy, a process which sees dense regions collapse to form stars. Credit: NASA, ESA and Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)



**PLANET:** Saturn and its famous rings caught in stunning detail by the Hubble in January 2004. Credit: NASA, ESA, J. Clarke (Boston University), and Z. Levay (STScI)

Mr Hall added: "Once they focused it, the biggest impact was to actually gauge the age of the universe.

"It's taken us right back to the beginning of time, it's put things in per-

spective. It's given us that.

And Mr Ward believes that the interest in astronomy is rising in the county.

"There's a great deal more aware-

ness about what's going on out there. Once you stir a bit of interest it's amazing where it goes," he said.

"Hubble had an impact partly through the images that people see."



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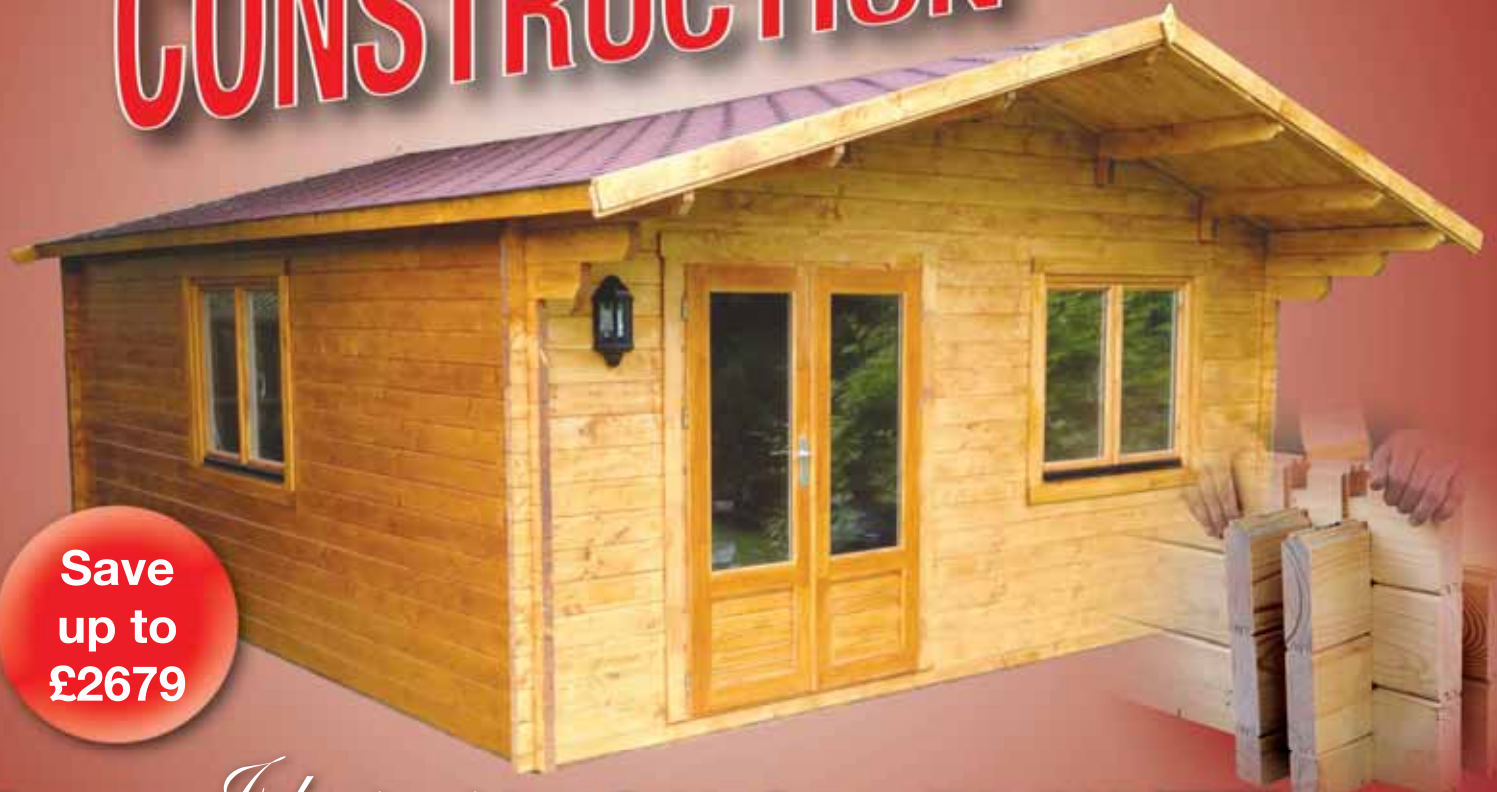
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**DANGEROUS:** Potholes damage roads, vehicles and the finances of local authorities

# They're back... Potholes make unwelcome return

Every year rain and freezing winter weather combine to open up cracks and holes in the county's roads and every year this damage needs to be located, repaired and paid for, writes Jamie Weir...

**A** LONGSIDE birth, death and taxes, one thing you can rely on is that when the weather turns cold, our roads will crumble and pothole season will arrive in earnest

A wet winter and cold weather, causing water to freeze and crack road surfaces, has played havoc with the county's transport links, leaving local authorities struggling to both keep up with the repairs necessary and find the funding to afford it.

But this year was supposed to be different, with central government announcing a £6 billion cash pot to help bolster cash-strapped council balance sheets around the country and ensure roads are well maintained.

The money covers the next six years.

Across the south east, the investment amounts to £130 million a year, enough to fix around 2.4 million potholes across the region.

The funding is even more important when the cost of damage caused to motorists' cars is taken into account.

The problem, says the AA, is that this cash hasn't really improved the situation for Kent County Council.

Central government would pay towards such repairs previously on an annual basis - and with the newly trumpeted fund also being paid annually, the reality is that KCC is handling its repair fund much as it has done in the past.

Paul Watters is the head of roads policy for the motoring organisation.

He told KoS: "Potholes are a bit of an historic issue in the UK. Our govern-



**FUNDING:** KCC's David Brazier

ment has never really recognised the importance of roads and because of this, they've never really got an appropriate level of funding.

"The UK just sees them as bits of tarmac, rather than the key arteries which transport 90 per cent of people in the UK every day. That has led to the slow degradation of our network, and it has now caused a backlog of problems which are not simple to keep constantly on top of.

"KCC is trying to preserve the asset by mending roads properly, rather than simply patching things shoddily. The problems arise because the council is wrestling with reduced budgets, but being expected to keep up its work fixing these issues."

Not keeping on top of the issue has led to KCC being named the third big-

gest pothole claim hot spot in the country. Figures obtained by motoring charity, the RAC Foundation, show that Kent drivers claimed for damage to their cars from potholes 224 times during 2013/2014, resulting in the council having to pay out £42,575 in repairs.

It's a figure the council can't afford on a regular basis, so the plan now is to fix the potholes as soon as they appear.

Speaking before his recent resignation David Brazier, the council's former cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "Through additional funding we have carried out more work on our roads to address the pounding they received during the extreme, wet weather last winter.

"We know that this is the time of year when extreme bad weather causes potholes, and have prepared by allocating extra crews to fix potholes when required."

Mr Watters says that this is the time of year the roads get worse, with potholes appearing at a faster rate.

He said: "We see more people having trouble with potholes after cold, wet winters, but serious damage to cars is still, thankfully, rare.

"The majority of cases we see are damaged tyres, but when potholes get really bad, it can result in much more expensive damage."

The bane of motorists, potholes are also costly to fill for KCC.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has estimated the average cost of finding and fixing a pothole is £53. The county council says that it has managed to reduce that cost to just £34 us-

ing online reporting tools and a commitment to first-time fixes.

A KCC spokesman told KoS that the council always aims for a strong, long lasting repair to ensure the problem doesn't occur again.

He said: "Crews always aim to make permanent, first-time fixes by cutting out and removing damaged material, then replacing it with hot asphalt that's bonded to the freshly-cut surface and compacted to reduce the risk of failure.

"To protect extra investment by both KCC and the Government in pothole repairs over the past six years, where possible, the county's highways team seals roads with surface treatments, such as a stone and asphalt layer, which prevents water penetration."

The DfT announced that it was changing the way in which it funded council's pothole repairs on December 23 last year.

Instead of giving the council an annual spend, it said it was committing £6 billion to tackling the problem between 2015 and 2021.

In announcing the 'locked-in funding', the transport minister, Patrick McLoughlin said that funding would put an end to short term fixes and mean £10 billion was committed to maintaining roads between 2010 and 2021.

Despite that money, Professor Stephen Glaister, the director of the RAC Foundation, said that it was Westminster's fault for failing to keep roads in a good condition.

He said: "The fundamental problem

## HOW DO POTHOLE FORM?

POTHOLEs are created when the road surface breaks up to expose the layers beneath. One reason for this is the amount of traffic the road has to carry.

Despite the greater levels of traffic using the county than elsewhere in the UK, the primary cause for potholes is the weather.

Water can build up on the surface of roads quickly during wet winters, and, seeps into cracks in the roads surface. If it freezes, it expands, putting pressure onto the cracks. When this process is repeated, it leads to damage on the road's surface, and eventually the pothole gets progressively worse.

lies not at the doors of our town halls but with central government. Despite occasional one-off grants related to periods of harsh weather, they are simply not giving councils enough money to keep their road networks up to scratch.

"In England, local authorities themselves estimate the maintenance backlog to be about £12 billion yet over the past five years spending on roads in real terms has dropped 22 per cent across England and Wales.

"Worn out road surfaces do not simply cause damage to vehicles they are also potentially lethal, particularly for two-wheeled road users."





**FUTURE:** Gravesham council's plans for the £120m redevelopment of the Heritage Quarter were taken to the High Court by campaign group Urban Gravesham

# Fight over town centre set to go on?

By Sarah Linney  
sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

**C**AMPAIGNERS have called the borough council "abusive and aggressive" after it criticised them for bringing a court case opposing a controversial town centre redevelopment scheme.

The £120m Heritage Quarter redevelopment scheme was given the go ahead by Gravesham Borough Council at the end of April 2013.

It would see three key areas of the town, including a riverside stretch, be revitalised with new shops, restaurants, cafes, a new town square, 330 new homes and landscaped riverside gardens.

But it became mired in a legal swamp after local campaign group Urban Gravesham opposed the project - and initiated legal steps, claiming the council had not acted lawfully in giving the scheme the go ahead.

The case went to the High Court with Mr Justice Ouseley on Monday ruling in the council's favour.

However, the council - and consequently the taxpayer - has been hit by a legal fee likely to run into tens of thousands of pounds.

Responding to its defeat, a statement from the volunteer campaign group Urban Gravesham said the council's behaviour "should worry everyone in Gravesham".

The council subsequently criticised the group for wasting taxpayers' money on the case.

Gravesham council leader, Labour's John Burden, said: "This judgement is a vindication of the council's

decision and the professional advice from its officers. The judge effectively produced a forensic shredding of the case against the authority.

"All sides ought to accept this ruling as final and at long last, we can build this desperately needed regeneration project which was originally proposed a decade ago.

"The council and its development partner have suffered a protracted campaign of misinformation and delaying tactics which the judge's decision should have brought to an end.

"The secretary of state did not call the scheme in for an inquiry. Members must finally be allowed to do the job they were democratically elected to do."

But the group says it has every right to challenge what it believes to be a deeply wrong decision by the local authority.

The group said in a statement: "What is very unusual is the vehemence of the council's response.

"The might of the council's PR department is being brought to bear, to attack local people for doing what is their right in a democratic society - opposing commercial development by private developers in their town centre.

"Our concern was that major controversial development, which had been approved by the very narrowest of margins, had turned out to be something far less than had been promised when planning permission was granted.

"With the judgement, that concern remains unanswered. It is far from clear for what reasons the 44 members of the council all failed to ask for

the application to be recalled to the committee. Given the level of public concern about it they plainly should have done."

And they say that, far from wasting taxpayers' money, they were right to bring the challenge.

"We sought permission from the court for the legal challenge and it was granted because we had a strong case," the statement added.

"It took four months for a very senior planning specialist judge to reach a decision.

"He was plainly troubled by the council's behaviour and the suggestion that he 'shredded' our legal case is nonsense.

"The reason we were driven to the extreme measure of taking the matter to court was because we were unable to get any part of the council's apparatus to respond to our concern. That failure to respond is referred to several times in the judgment and it plainly puzzled Mr Justice Ouseley too."

The group said it was the council's behaviour that should worry people, not theirs.

"The behaviour of the council is a failure of the democratic process in Gravesham which their abusive and aggressive behaviour towards dissenters in the community cannot mask," the statement added.

"The council has incurred huge and irrecoverable cost to prevent the matter being reconsidered by the planning committee.

"That every one of the elected members chose to stand by the private developer rather than the community should worry everyone in Gravesham, whether they support the Heritage Quarter scheme or not."



**MAP:** Diagram shows the scheme's planned Eastern and Western Quarters

The group now faces a £5,000 legal bill - the maximum amount they will have to pay to meet some of the council's costs. But the authority claims it has already spent more than £50,000.

The judge's role was not to rule on whether the development was appropriate, but to rule on whether the council had followed proper procedures.

He ruled that councillors and officers had indeed acted properly, that the planning committee had not been misled when they granted permission for the development.

He said the planning officer had been correct when he advised the council to approve the scheme, adding that if councillors had had concerns they could have aired them.

He also ruled that the legal department had advised the board correctly

about the risk of turning down the application and the fact that any ensuing appeal by the developer was likely to be successful.

Council leader John Burden told KoS "The judge went through their entire case very carefully.

"If we can get two or three large retailers, they will complement the small retailers and the mix will make the whole place vibrant. The development will also create around 600 jobs once it is finished, as well as jobs while it is being built.

"If we can offer a range of different types of shops, as well as restaurants and a cinema, with the freedom for people to walk around in the sunshine and the open air, we could rival Blawater."

Urban Gravesham says it is considering its options with its legal team.





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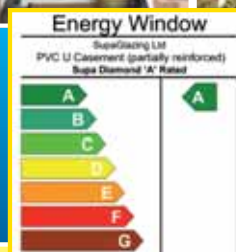
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# Lessons must be learned from fallen academy

Ramsgate's Marlowe Academy is to be engulfed within a merger with a neighbouring school and its name changed – bringing down the curtain on the county's first academy. **Chris Britcher** reports

**T**HE demise of any school is one which sends shockwaves through local communities. But only the most optimistic would not have seen the Marlowe Academy's death coming from a long way off.

Opened in 2005 as Kent's first academy, it was supposed to usher in a new era of schools – in control of their budgets and their destiny, at one with the community they serve; raising standards and driving up achievement levels.

Replacing the failing Ramsgate School, it was born into a purpose-built £30m site, supported by local billionaire Roger de Haan, the former boss of the Saga empire, and even had Kent County Council – the very authority out of whose control it had opted out from – as one of its partners.

What could possibly go wrong? Where do we start?

Years of disappointing results which saw it become consistently one of the worst performing schools in the country, an alarming lack of progress, a turnover of headteachers more akin to an under-performing football team (four in four years), countless poor Ofsted reports (including being put in special measures) and, perhaps the final nail in its coffin, a plummeting roll call, led to a decision few were surprised by this week.

In an announcement termed "an exciting new development" by its senior staff, it was confirmed the academy was to merge with the neighbouring non-selective Ellington and Hereson School (EHS).

Currently boasting a 'good' rating from Ofsted, EHS remains, for now at least, a local authority-controlled school, but is in the process of switching to become an academy itself under the Coastal Academies Trust umbrella.

The trust is certainly one of those that can be considered a success. Boasting both Dane Court Grammar and the King Ethelbert School. Both, say academy chiefs, will play a role in the new look school – which will be renamed the Augustus Pugin Academy. Named after the famous Victorian architect

and designer who lived in Ramsgate.

In a letter to parents, Ellington and Hereson governors and head teacher Simon Pullen described the Marlowe Academy as now "financially unviable" and the merger offered the chance for a "fresh approach to secondary schooling in Ramsgate" by the start of the next academic year in September.

Little wonder. Last September's intake at the Marlowe into Year 7 was a mere 32 children – a long way off its 180 available spaces. With school funding calculated on a per head basis, ironically, it simply could no longer make the sums add up. Its merger partner, however, was oversubscribed.

Certainly its shortcomings have plenty of mitigating circumstances. There are pockets of genuine deprivation within its catchment area, the selective system deprives it of some of the more able students and as any teacher will tell you, there is a limit to what can be achieved with students with little or no parental support when it comes to their education.

Roger Gough, Kent County Council's education chief, believes those challenges will not go away, but that with the new arrangements they could, finally, be overcome.

He told KoS: "I think the Marlowe's sponsor was very committed to it and did make a serious effort.

"We certainly did want to be supportive but there's no doubt that for whatever reason it wasn't able to solve those problems effectively. It was coming from what was already a very challenging situation. That was how it became an academy in the first place. There was a real history there of difficulties."

Education advisor Peter Read, a former head teacher and one who monitors closely the state of Kent's schools, has long had concerns about the Marlowe.

Critical of the previous trust behind the Marlowe who he accuses of failing to manage the situation the school faced effectively, he is upbeat about its chances going forward.

"The Coastal Academies Trust has an excellent reputation, and offers a chance for the



**FAREWELL:** The Marlowe Academy has been merged with Ellington and Hereson School



“ The Coastal Academies Trust has an excellent reputation, and offers a chance for long-suffering students at the academy to receive a decent education at last ”

Peter Read,  
Education advisor

long-suffering students at the academy, many of whom are fiercely proud of the Marlowe, to receive a decent education at last.”

The new school will see existing students split across both campuses. Certainly the students attending both schools will get to attend some of the most modern schools the county has to offer.

In addition to the Marlowe's buildings, EHS has too benefitted from a recent rebuild (formerly itself over two sites, it was rebuilt in 2007 with all students in the new site by 2011).

In a statement issued by the team behind the Marlowe Academy, it said: “The new school, under the leadership of Ellington and Hereson headteacher Simon Pullen, will provide an excellent opportunity to establish a successful school that is able to provide for up to 1,800 students whilst offering a broad, rich curriculum of study and enrichment.

“From this point discussions and consultations will begin with students, parents and staff about the detailed arrangements. Our key aim is



**FAILED:** The Marlowe Academy was the county's first academy but disappointing results saw it become one of the worst performing schools in the country

to ensure that there is minimum disruption to the learning of the students, especially those who will be working towards final exams.”

Not that it has gone down well with all, however.

Parents of students at the EHS have reacted with anger at their children now finding themselves aligned with a school many fought to avoid their child attending due to its damaged reputation.

An online petition set up by par-

ents had already collected close to 600 signatures by Friday – just days after the merger plan was made public. It is insisting the governors of Ellington explain their motives.

Those behind the petition says: “The board of governors have not consulted the parents or students on the matter of merging both schools in September 2015.

“The governors need to explain to both parents and students the logistics of this merger and why they were

not told of its advancement. Moving from a 600-pupil school to 1,800 is a huge leap and has the ability to hinder students' learning, please will the senior leadership teams of both schools assure us this is not the case.

“With the addition of the newly found sixth form at Ellington and Hereson in co-operation with Dane Court Grammar School there is also cause for concern over the current pupils studying the IBCC [International Baccalaureate] and whether

or not they will continue their studies or move to A level - this has not been clarified anywhere.

“An apology and explanation is needed and consultation sessions must begin immediately.”

A series of meetings with students and parents at both schools will be taking place over the coming weeks in what could prove to be stormy encounters.

Continued on page 16

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Continued from page 15

Roger Gough of KCC, which supports the merger, added: "I understand that people are anxious. These kind of changes can feel disruptive and I don't dismiss that."

"There are parents who say 'well actually I wanted my child to go to Ellington and Hereson and not the Marlowe Academy'."

"I think the answer is that the school that you have – Ellington and Hereson – very much continues. It's going to have leaders like the Coastal Academies Trust, who are very strong, and the merger with the Marlowe Academy brings advantages too."

Students will, as of September, be split across the two existing sites – which lie less than a mile from one another.

Years 7, 8 and 9 (Key Stage 3) will continue at the Ellington's existing site in Newlands Lane – upper years (Key Stage 4 and 5) will be relocated to the Marlowe's Stirling Way buildings.

Adds Cllr Gough: "There are some considerable facilities, there are big opportunities. The development which works well in Ellington and Hereson and Coastal Academies Trust has demonstrated well in every way carry over into the new school."

The head and governors and Ellington and Hereson insist there will be no loss of the intimate experience existing parents are so satisfied with.

They said: "This structure allows us to continue our 'small school' approach and support systems while at the same time safeguarding our finances and allowing for a wider curriculum at Key Stages 4 and 5."



**MERGER:** KCC's education chief Roger Gough

As for the pressing issue of demand, the rise and fall of birth rates may prove its salvation.

As Roger Gough explains: "At the moment Marlowe Academy is still very much below roll, we will actually need those places because of the demand that's already coming through Thanet primary schools."

One thing is certain though – and that is that Ramsgate needs all its schools performing well.

All communities that wish to thrive must ensure they look to the next generation to go one better and, as is so often overlooked in the clamour to hit government targets set

by education ministers wanting to work miracles overnight, it is the cohesion and confidence in our local schools to perform well which underpins that future prosperity.

There is no doubt the original Marlowe Academy appeared to be the very epitome of Tony Blair's vision for academies when the then-prime minister launched them.

It had strong support from respected and well-intentioned local businesses and even the county council whose direct reporting it relinquished itself from. Yet it faced the same struggles so many schools in Kent come up against. With the se-

## WHAT IS AN ACADEMY?

Designed to "improve pupil performance and break the cycle of low expectations" by incorporating "the best of private-sector best practice and innovative management", academies were introduced in 2000 by Tony Blair's Labour government as part of a brave new education era.

They morphed over the years, with the need for private sponsors being dropped in order for existing schools to exert more control.

Today, academies are state-funded schools in England which are directly funded by central government – through the Department for Education – and independent of direct control by the local authority. The majority of academies are secondary schools, but some primary schools also have academy status.

It means that rather than have to use Kent County Council or Medway Council's contractors and wage structures, they can balance their own books and buy in their



**ACADEMY MAN:** Tony Blair

own services and facilities.

They have the power to change the length of their school day should they so desire – although few deviate greatly from the norm.

Today, the majority of secondary schools in Kent and Medway now have academy status.

lective system creaming off the top 20 per cent of students and serving a deprived area, it struggled to secure the results required. And if your results are poor, then trying to secure a strong Ofsted rating becomes all that much harder.

There were certainly failings which many will say it should have addressed long ago, and ultimately it will be deemed a failure.

Yet those who attended it, or who continue to attend it, should never

be considered in such a vein.

Collective fingers are now crossed that under new leadership and management, from the ashes of the Marlowe can rise something which Ramsgate, Thanet, and indeed all of Kent, can be proud of.

■ **What do you think? Share your views and join the debate. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**

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## CANDIDATES

### Full list of confirmed candidates:

Mark Reckless (Ukip)  
**Naushabah Khan (Lab)**  
 Dan Burn (TUSC)  
**Clive Gregory (Green)**  
 Kelly Tolhurst (Con)

**ROCHESTER:** The only Ukip constituency in the county

# Will Rochester fall from Ukip's grasp?

Our constituency guide continues. By **Maria Chiorando**

**R**OCHESTER and Strood is a unique constituency in the county – a lone spot of Ukip purple in an otherwise uniform sea of Tory blue.

It wasn't always this way – until November of last year, it too was a Conservative stronghold, with MP Mark Reckless as MP since its inception in 2010, when its name was changed from Rochester and Chatham.

But Mr Reckless decided that his policies aligned more closely with those of anti-Europe party Ukip, and so defected.

A by-election was called, a new Tory candidate, Kelly Tolhurst, was chosen and the parties went head-to-head.

In what was described as 'kitchen sink' campaigning, prime minister David Cameron made five trips to the area in a bid to hold onto it.



**CONSERVATIVE:**  
Kelly Tolhurst

Despite this, Mr Reckless saved his seat, albeit with a smaller majority than in 2010. Significantly, it was a far less convincing victory than many political pundits expected.

All of which creates a battle which may well become one of the most fascinating in the country.

For all Ukip's bluster and publicity, there is no denying it is losing ground – should the Tories win this one back, it will send out a message of intent. And terrify other Tory MPs who may be pondering a switch to Ukip in the future.

Which means Mark Reckless may be the only MP who loses his seat at the ballot box in the county in May. But that fight is far from lost.

Ms Tolhurst is back on the campaign trail, trumpeting her local roots and looking to win back a clearly uncertain Right-leaning electorate. She will be desperate to put November's defeat behind her.

Also in contention will be Labour's Naushabah Khan, who trailed a long way behind winner Mr Reckless in the by-election, but impressed with her performance in the hustings.

Other candidates are Clive Gregory of the Green Party and Dan Burn, representing the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

Incumbent Mr Reckless feels he 'has a good chance' in May. "In terms of the candidates," he says, "it's a re-run of the by-election, and I'm hoping for the same result."

"I think because I have been an MP here for five years, and been a candidate for 10 years before that, there are people who vote for me."

"I also believe there has been a very

substantial move to Ukip and people who came with me making that transition, who will stay with me at the general election."

"During the by-election, the prime minister was appealing for supporters of all parties to vote against me, so you might have someone who voted for the Tories in the by-election, but will go back to voting Labour in the general election."

It would be easy to assume, therefore, that the outcome of this election will be based very much on national perceptions of the two main parties. Yet the same local issues keep cropping up.

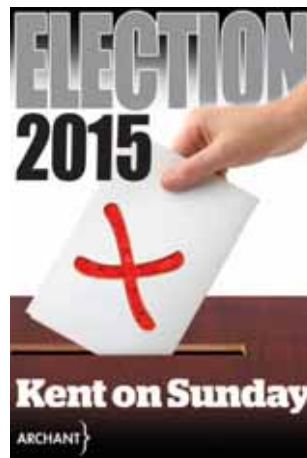
Mr Reckless says: "I think the number one concern is Medway Maritime Hospital, and getting that out of special measures."

Labour's Ms Khan says: "There are definitely concerns about people being able to see doctors, and we have been affected by the A&E crisis. People have told me that the staff at hospitals and GP surgeries are great, but getting in is a problem."

This is also a key issue for Dan Burn of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, who believes that the health service nationally, as well as locally is an ongoing concern.

The Green Party's Clive Gregory sees the issue as one that requires public engagement, saying: "We really need to highlight the risks of privatising the NHS, and make sure that people fully understand what is going on with how it all works – Medway Maritime is an area that really needs attention."

Another hugely contentious issue is the proposed Lodge Hill develop-



ment, which would see 5,000 homes built on a large brown field and green field site in the constituency.

The major problem is that the area houses a number of nightingales, a species that like many others, has seen its numbers decline in recent years. The big issue is whether it is enough to stop a development which would ease Medway's 20,000-strong waiting list.

Mr Reckless is opposed to the plans, saying: "I support housing being built along river fronts, as long as the proper flood defences are in place. What I don't support is the building of 5,000 homes on a bird sanctuary."

He is backed up in this by Ms Tolhurst, who feels that in addition to the environmental issues, there are constituents' fears that additional houses could place strains on already overburdened health, education and transport facilities.

She says: "I am delighted it's being called in for a public enquiry, and will be working until we have made the point that this is not the right development for this place."

At the other end of the spectrum is Ms Khan, who believes the development would be a positive step. "There is a problem with lack of housing," she explains. "We have a waiting list of 20,000 people that has to be addressed, these houses have to go somewhere, and Lodge Hill is a piece

## PREVIOUS RESULTS

### Past general election results for Rochester & Strood:

#### 2014 By-election

Mark Reckless (Ukip)	16,867 (42.1%)
Kelly Tolhurst (Con)	13,947 (34.8%)
Naushabah Khan (Lab)	6,713 (16.8%)
Clive Gregory (Green)	1,692 (4.2%)
Geoff Juby (Lib Dem)	349 (0.9%)
Hairy Knorm Davidson (MRLP)	151 (0.4%)
Stephen Goldsborough (IND)	69 (0.2%)
Nick Long (PBP)	56 (0.1%)
Jayda Fransen (Britain First)	56 (0.1%)
Mike Barker (IND)	43 (0.1%)
Charlotte Rose	43 (0.1%)
Dave Osborn (Patriotic Socialist Party)	33 (0.1%)
Christopher Challis (IND)	22 (0.1%)

**Majority 2,920 (7.3 per cent)**



**UKIP:**  
Mark Reckless

Continued on Page 20



Continued from Page 19

of land that has been part of a conversation for over 20 years now.

"Part of the development agreement is £7 million towards new road infrastructure, a health centre, two new primary schools, a secondary school and acres of land mitigated for nightingales – we won't get the same deal in terms of infrastructure anywhere else."

Unsurprisingly, the Green Party has come out in strong opposition to the plans – with Mr Gregory raising concerns about how affordable the housing will be, and whether it will be priced to benefit local people.

The education issue is another that all candidates were keen to push. With what Mr Reckless describes as "some of the worst primary results in the country, and over half schools in special measures or needing improvements" it is at the top of the agenda.

Ms Tolhurst says: "The secondary sector is performing well, although there is always room for improvement, but we need to be tough on under performing schools."

TUSC's Mr Burn also feels education should be high on the constituency's agenda saying: "I am against academies and free schools – everyone should be entitled to a free education controlled by their local councils."

"I also think tuition fees should be scrapped, better education can result in better employment, and everyone should be entitled to better themselves."

Ms Tolhurst raises the political hot potato of immigration – and is the only candidate to do so.

She says: "Knocking on doors and talking to people, this is still a huge concern in the area."

## KOS PREDICTS...



THIS is a two horse race between Ukip and the Tories.

Mr Reckless is one of the more accomplished Ukipers, which holds some sway with disenfranchised voters.

However, while Ms Tolhurst lacked some of the polish of her Ukip opponent during the by-election run up, she is now more experienced – and general elections are a different animal.

The Tories could claw this one back.

"People want to see a crack down on illegal immigration, with a tougher benefits system in place, and limited access to social housing for immigrants – hardworking families want to see their taxes protected, and spent on the issues that affect them."

# Blue is the colour in our ex-boroughs

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THE constituency of Bromley and Chislehurst came into existence in 1997, and since then, it's been a Tory stronghold, with majorities ranging from comfortable to enormous.

Current incumbent Bob Neill has been in place since a by-election in 2006 (which saw him beat a then lesser-known Nigel Farage into third place).



CONSERVATIVE: Bob Neill

## CANDIDATES

### Full list of confirmed candidates for Bromley and Chislehurst:

Bob Neill (Con)  
**John Cortneidge (Lab)**  
Sam Webber (Lib Dem)  
**Roisin Robertson (Green)**  
Emmett Jenner (Ukip)

## CANDIDATES

### Full list of confirmed candidates for Old Bexley & Sidcup:

James Brokenshire (Con)  
**Ibrahim Mehmet (Lab)**  
Derek Moran (Green)  
**Catherine Reilly (Ukip)**  
Dr Bob Gill (Nat Health Action)

He only beat second place Lib Dem candidate Ben Abbotts by a measly 633 votes – which translated into a 2.2 per cent majority, but gave his replacement Sam Webber a thorough thrashing in the 2010 general election, where he emerged very comfortably with a 31.6 per cent majority.

Labour's Chris Kirby lagged behind in third place, with just 16.6 per cent of the votes, leaving them unlikely to mount a serious challenge to the current Conservative incumbent.

The most excitement here may simply be the scrap among the other parties for the runner-up spots.

The Lib Dems have failed miserably to gather momentum, while there will be considerable interest in the likes of the Greens and Ukip. Once mi-

nor parties, both are shaping up to push forward and seek a decent share of the vote.

Roisin Robertson is the Green candidate, and Emmett Jenner is representing Ukip.

Alongside Labour's John Courtneidge and the Lib Dem's Sam Webber, expect them all to be racing for second place.

Issues affecting the local area include housing – as an increasingly popular commuter area, demand is rising. On top of this, the number of 'qualified homeless' has risen ten-fold in the last few years, which has seen the council having to dip into reserve funds to pay for nightly accommodation.

Transport is also an area of concern for many, with a current possi-

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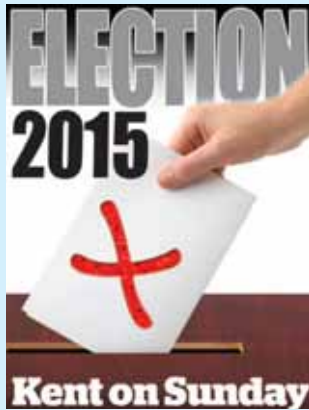


## KOS PREDICTS...

BOTH Bromley & Chislehurst and Old Bexley & Sidcup have had strong Conservative support for many years.

Despite growing support for parties like Ukip and the Greens, the Conservative incumbents are unlikely to face any serious threat to their position.

Both areas will remain blue - and with a comfortable majority too.



lity of Bromley being linked to the Bakerloo Line on the Underground

Some parties have highlighted the need for more schools across the constituency, with the proposed French language school on Havlock recreational ground causing concern for some residents.

As ever, though, expect national issues to hold the greatest sway.

Old Bexley and Sidcup is another staunchly Conservative constituency.

Current incumbent James Brokenshire, who is also minister for security and immigration, became MP in 2010, following a two year stretch by Independent Derek Conway, and his profile has grown rapidly.

Aside from a blip in 1997, where the majority slipped to an uncom-

forable seven per cent, the area has seen overwhelming Conservative victories and it is hard to imagine this year being any different.

Hoping to challenge Mr Brokenshire this year are Labour's Ibrahim Mehmet, Catherine Reilly of Ukip, Derek Moran (Green), and Bob Gill of the National Health Action Party.

His growing fame in such a high profile role, however, is likely to be enough to see him home and dry in Westminster, however.

Local issues include health provisions - with the Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, facing closure fears in recent times.

The area's proximity to London, but lack of an Underground connection mean that transport, and in particular, the performance

## PREVIOUS RESULTS

### Past general election results for Bromley & Chislehurst:

#### 2010

Bob Neill (Con)	23,569
(53.5%)	
Sam Webber (Lib Dem)	9,669
(22.0%)	
Chris Kirby (Lab)	7,295
(16.6%)	
Emmett Jenner (Ukip)	1,451
(3.3%)	
Rowena Savage (BNP)	1,070
(2.4%)	
Roisin Robertson (Green)	607
(1.5%)	
Jon Cheeseman (Eng Dems)	376
(0.9%)	

**Majority 13,900 (31.6%)**

#### 2005

Eric Forth (Con)	23,583
(51.1%)	
Rachel Reeves (Lab)	10,241
(22.2%)	
Peter Brookes (Lib Dem)	9,368
(20.3%)	
David Hooper (Ukip)	1,475
(3.2%)	
Ann Garrett (Green)	1,470
(3.2%)	

**Majority 13,342 (28.9%)**

of Southeastern trains remains a key concern for commuters.

The former Kent London boroughs are, like the county they were once part of, staunchly blue.

## PREVIOUS RESULTS

### Past general election results for Old Bexley:

#### 2010

James Brokenshire (Con)	24,625
(54.1%)	
Rick Everitt (Lab)	8,768
(19.3%)	
Duncan Borrowman (Lib Dem)	6,996
(15.4%)	
John Brooks (BNP)	2,132
(4.7%)	
David Coburn (Ukip)	1,532
(3.4%)	
Elaine Cheeseman (Eng Dems)	520
(1.1%)	
John Hemming-Clark (Independents to save Queen Mary's Hospital)	393
(0.9%)	
Jonathan Rooks (Green)	371
(0.8%)	
Napoleon Dynamite (Monster Raving Loony)	155
(0.3%)	

**Majority 15,857 (34.9%)**

#### 2005

Derek Conway (Con)	22,191
(49.8%)	
Gavin Moore (Lab)	2,271
(27.5%)	
Nick O'Hare (Lib Dem)	6,564
(14.7%)	
Michael Barnbrook (Ukip)	2,015
(4.5%)	
Claire Sayers (BNP)	1,227
(2.8%)	
Gregory Peters (Ind)	304
(0.7%)	

**Majority 9,920 (22.3%)**



**CONSERVATIVE:** James Brokenshire

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# Distilling the pure essence of the county in a specialist gin

By Jamie Weir  
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

**W**HEN pharmaceutical company Glaxo-SmithKline announced it was closing the doors on its Dartford complex, it delivered a hammer blow to the staff who worked there.

But while some took to the bar to drown their sorrows, two PhD research scientists stared into their drink and looked up inspired.

Today, some five years after they left the drugs giant, they are the brains behind the Anno Distillery in the village of Marden, near Tonbridge – the first micro-distillery to create gin in the county for more than 200 years.

Utilising their scientific knowledge and expertise, they consider themselves alchemists; using their special academic training to create what they describe as a proper Kentish gin.

It is the result of some 60 years combined knowledge and one which the scientists – Dr Andrew Reason and Dr Norman Lewis – are very proud of.

Explained Dr Reason: “We both spent 30 years in the pharmaceutical industry, so although this is different

in many ways, there are similarities. We used our scientific background a lot to create our final gin.

“We did a tremendous amount of research into gin before we started, looking at the history of it, and examining every detail of the spirit. We managed to come up with 300 separate botanicals, or the plant extracts used to flavour it, which had been used in gin in the past. Some of them were very odd indeed. We then took 50 of the ingredients we liked the sound of and started our gin experiments.

“We slowly refined this, trying each of them on their own, before we eventually brought the number down to 25 which we began using to blend the gin.”

Juniper is required as the major flavouring in order for it to legally be called spirit gin. But, in addition, gins can contain a number of other botanical blends – and many of the less commonly used flavours which can be sourced in Kent are used to create the Anno Kent Dry Gin.

After further experimentation, as well as a lot of work refining their palates, the pair managed to come up with 16 final options. It was at this point that Dr Reason and Dr Lewis' background really came into its own.

Dr Lewis explains: “We began to really utilise our scientific skills, experi-

menting with the various ingredients which we had decided we liked the most. We were using a small two-litre still to make the gin in mini batches.

“That meant we could create a lot of different blends that allowed us to spend time refining the levels of each botanical and work on creating a flawless product.”

It would seem critics share their admiration for the product.

Their gin has won a number of accolades from the International Wine and Spirit Competition and the Great Taste Award.

It uses six separate botanicals which are typically Kentish, and sourced locally. These flavours include hops, samphire and lavender which is harvested from Downderry Nursery – in keeping with the pair's scientific background. Downderry Nursery is home to the world's only scientific collection of lavender.

Dr Reason said: “We are both passionate about the county, and about making a gin which reflects the best of Kent. We made a conscious decision to use Kent botanicals to flavour the spirit, and decided to source them locally.

“That's because we wanted to ensure that Kent was represented in the drink.”

And in a sign of the micro-distillers

success, it is already looking to the future, with two new, typically Kentish products. Elderflower vodka will soon be complementing the distillery's range, alongside a particularly Kentish sloe gin, and Dr Lewis and Dr Reason are excited about the future.

Dr Lewis told KoS that they also have other projects which they hope they can soon launch.

He said: “We are actually speaking with our Kent wineries and breweries about partnering with them to come up with other products. It isn't something we can say too much about right now, but it would be great to work alongside these other local businesses. Kent is such a great county to do business, and we've found that we, as a young distillery, have been really nurtured by bigger, more established businesses in the county. It's such a great network to be a part of.”

But despite the passion that the pair have put into their gourmet gin, it very nearly never happened as they had a love affair with whisky before the clear spirit.

Dr Reason said: “We are big whisky buffs, so when we were thinking about what we'd like to create, whisky was at the top of the list. However, in order to sell it as whisky, rules dictate that it has to be stored for three years.



“Norman loves gin and really favoured the idea of creating a fantastic Kent spirit. So that's what we decided to do. Initially we began distilling the gin in my kitchen.

“But then in 2012, we had the confidence we could make a great product, and we ploughed money into the business. We bought a still from a traditional German family still maker near Stuttgart. They've been making

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**ALCHEMY:** Andy Reason (left) and Norman Lewis at the heart of the operation

stills since 1869, so know what they're doing.

"We chose a fairly small still in order to ensure that every batch was kept at the highest quality. With the still running at 300 litres, we can still make around 80,000 bottles each year. At the moment, we produce around 10 per cent of that."

But even when the still was delivered to the premises in Marden, pro-

duction couldn't commence instantly – that was something of a blessing, as it helped the pair come up with a female name for their still: something of a tradition for distilleries across the world.

Dr Reason said: "We had to wait for the correct licence to be in place which would allow us to begin producing gin. That meant quite a wait as it came through. In the end, it took

so long we decided to name our still Patience."

And now the company is preparing for the future, with new products, Dr Lewis says they may have to take on more staff.

He said: "Things have taken off faster than we imagined they would, and we are now selling across the country with distributors in Scotland and elsewhere.



**CHEERS:** A host of flavours - all with a Kentish theme



**PLANT:** Bottle of gin created at the Marden distillery



"We have plenty of capacity with the equipment, but need more people to work with us to produce the gin. At

the moment, when things get busy, we are having friends and family help us with bottling."

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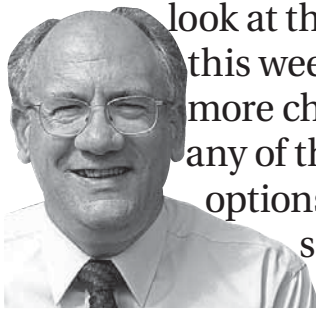
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# Rise in pupils not getting places at chosen schools

Education advisor **PETER READ**, writing for Kent on Sunday, takes a look at the latest statistics this week which revealed more children failing to get any of their preferred options when it came to selecting a secondary school



KENT SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS: MARCH 2015

Kent pupils	2015		2014		2013		2012	
	No. of Pupils	%	No. of Pupils	%	No. of Pupils	%	No. of Pupils	%
Offered a first preference	12,796	80.5%	13,092	83.6%	12,754	84.2%	12,613	82.8%
Offered a second preference	1,612	10.1%	1,512	9.6%	1,456	9.6%	1,481	9.7%
Offered a third preference	478	3.1%	478	3.1%	448	3.0%	505	3.3%
Offered a fourth preference	181	1.1%	18	11.2%	129	0.9%	183	1.2%
Allocated by Local Authority	641	4.03%	404	2.6%	357	2.3%	443	2.9%
Total number of Kent pupils offered	15,894		15,667		15,144		15,225	

KENT and Medway secondary allocation figures were published this week - and both revealed a worrying fall in the proportion of children being awarded any of their preferred options.

In Kent, parents can list their top four schools - and in Medway top six - when making an application to a secondary school.

But the latest figures reveal 641 Kent children and 155 Medway children not getting any school they have chosen.

This is a rise of 237 children in Kent, the highest proportion in recent years, totalling four per cent of the total being allocated places by Kent County Council.

In Medway, there has been an increase in local authority allocations in each of the past four years, taking its allocation figure to a record five per cent.

The four key factors are likely to be: A further increase of 227 in the number of Kent pupils needed to be found places in our schools, with Medway increasing by 111 having come out of a sharp fall up to 2013.

In addition, there is the increasing polarisation of choices, as families chase the more popular and successful schools, at the expense of some non-selective schools that are seeing

numbers shrink as families seek to avoid them.

There is also an alarming surge in out of county applicants being offered places in Kent secondary schools, rising by 155 to 757; and the removal of 300 places in Kent following the closure of the Chaucer Technology College in Canterbury and the recently announced closure of Oasis Hextable Academy.

Overall, 81 per cent of both Kent and Medway children were awarded their first choice school, down on 2014. Some 296 fewer Kent pupils were awarded their first preference this year than in 2014, whereas in Medway it increased by 76, although at a slower rate than the overall increase in numbers. These falls in proportion of first choices awarded probably accounted for by the above factors.

Nationally, there is concern about the number of school places being created, and in Kent we should certainly have seen at least a further 250 places (equivalent to one large new school) being provided this year and every year to keep pace with the increase in the school population.

Some schools have expanded to meet demand, but this appears to be happening mainly in the grammar school sector, with Queen Elizabeth's in Faversham being the first to break

the glass ceiling and add a form of entry in the face of assertions that grammars could not legally be expanded.

It has now been followed by Dartford, Dartford Girls, Judd, Sir Roger Manwood's, Skinners, and Wilmington Boys, and the possibility of the Sevenoaks annexe.

An alternative is to see the mantra "every school should be a good school" turned into reality... for some of those 641 children allocated places by KCC will have the nightmare of being offered schools that are unacceptable to them for quite understandable reasons. In total, there are around 1,000 empty spaces across Kent's secondary schools. Other fam-

ilies will now look more closely at schools they have not or would not, initially consider and find they are not so bad after all.

This year, the schools with the highest number of first choices, over and above the capacity of the school: are Dartford Grammar (179); St George's, Broadstairs (129); Valley Park, Maidstone (118); Dartford Girls (106); Skinners, Tunbridge Wells (100); Fulston Manor, Sittingbourne (95); and King Ethelbert, Birchington (80).

So what next? If you are not awarded the school of your choice, then certainly go on the waiting list for every school you have applied for and wish to consider. You have the right to appeal to any and every school for which you have been turned down although these figures suggest that appeal numbers will rise, whereas the number of successes will not.

Grammar school appeals will rise sharply in numbers as the new Kent Test has produced outcomes with a much larger proportion of children appearing to have missed the pass mark narrowly, although there are unlikely to be more successes because of pressure on space.

You also have the option of making a late application for a fresh school after April 24. You can apply for as many schools as you wish through

this process. Every year we see a considerable 'churning' effect as children take up places off the waiting lists, as children win appeals at higher preferences, and some unhappy families remove themselves from the state system, so don't lose hope.

Medway's position is tighter than Kent with regard to empty spaces, with just 192 being vacant in spite of 100 additional spaces being added into schools.

The increase of 111 in the number of Medway children offered places confirms the sharp decline in numbers to 2013 is well and truly over.

However, the proportion of first preferences met continues its steady decline every year since 2012.

Last year Brompton Academy was the most oversubscribed school in Kent and Medway, but this year it accounted for 159 of the 614 rejected first preferences, in spite of adding on an additional class of 30 children and it is apparent that the polarisation of choices, as described above, is playing a considerable role here, as families try and avoid the most unpopular schools.

■ Peter Read is a former head teacher and now runs his own consultancy service - Kent Independent Education Advice, helping parents in the appeals process. For further details, see [www.kentadvice.co.uk](http://www.kentadvice.co.uk)

MEDWAY SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS: MARCH 2015

Medway pupils	2015		2014		2013		2012
	No. of Pupils	%	No. of Pupils	%	No. of Pupils	%	%
Offered a first preference	2,499	80.7%	2,423	81.2%	2,425	86.0%	86.7%
Offered a place at one of their six choices	2,940	95%	2,865	96.0%	2,730	96.8%	98.6%
Allocated by Local Authority	155	5.0%	120	4.0%	90	3.2%	1.4%
Total number of Medway pupils offered	3,095		2,984		2,820		2,949





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# Audrey Hepburn's little-known performance in tiny village hall

She remains the epitome of the golden era of movie making. But did you realise Academy Award winner Audrey Hepburn lived in the county? **Molly Kersey** takes a look at the star's intriguing childhood...

**W**HETHER as a social butterfly flitting around New York in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* or causing Higgins to lament over her dreadful accent in *My Fair Lady*, most of us will have a favourite image of Audrey Hepburn which sticks in our minds.

With her elfin features and impeccable style, the actress and humanitarian was hailed as a film and fashion icon during Hollywood's golden age of film, winning the best actress Academy Award for her role in the classic *Roman Holiday*.

Exuding elegance and grace, she remains something of an idol for many to this day.

But what many don't realise is that she spent part of her childhood in the county – spending time in the village of Elham, situated between Folkestone and Canterbury.

What's more, one of her earliest ever stage performances took place right here.

She was affectionately known by the villagers as 'little Audrey' after moving to the tranquil village with her mother.

They lived in Orchard Cottage in Duck Street, the name of which was later changed to Five Bells.

It was owned by a Mrs Butcher at the time.

Born in Brussels in 1929, Audrey was the only child of the marriage between Joseph Anthony Hepburn-Ruston and Dutch Baroness Ella van Heemstra.

She also had two half-brothers from one of her mother's previous marriages.

Following the divorce of her parents in 1935, Audrey and her mother left Brussels and made their way to the county.

Bryan Badham, of the Elham Historical Society, said: "We don't know exactly why they came here, with the passing of time it's hard to say and you can only guess now.

"School teacher Mary Smith remembered them coming, and detailed them in her diary. Her records were used by the author Dennis Knight in his book *Harvest of Messerschmitts*, which looked at the village during the war."

He added: "We have no records to show exactly how long Audrey and her mother were here, as far as I am aware it was sometime between 1936 and 1940."

Known at the time as Audrey Kathleen Ruston, the actress enjoyed an untroubled and happy childhood during her time in Elham and went to school just a few feet away from the cottage where they lived.

Pictures of her during that period show her happily at play, depicting her with the East Kent Hunt hounds in the field at the rear of the kennels

and playing with her dolls in the garden of Five Bells.

And it was in Elham that Audrey took to the stage, in what might have been her debut.

Those who watched the play witnessed the future Sabrina Fairchild take on the role of an ordinary soldier in the village Elham 1st Brownie pack's version of Humpty Dumpty.

It was staged for the village fete.

Audrey performed alongside her friend Peggy Phillips, who played the part of a corporal and has spoken of her fond memories of the budding star.

And people in the village had other endearing memories of the "saucer eyed" girl.

Mr Badham added: "Whilst in Elham she attended two private schools. Resident John Palmer remembers attending Mrs Hubbles' school with Audrey in a property called West Bank, this was a very small school with only six or seven pupils.

"Audrey also attended the Rigden's School in the square, where apparently teacher Norah Rigden became an important part of young Audrey's life, helping her to form her soon-to-be-famous English speaking voice.

"In the late 1930s, Bill Watson worked as a gardener at the Vicarage, he remembered giving Audrey and the vicar's four daughters rides around the garden in his wheelbarrow."

Writer Dennis Knight remembered Audrey in his book, *Harvest of Messerschmitts*, a chronicle of a village at war in 1940.

Teacher Miss Smith's diary helps form the core of the book, which unfolds to explore the cataclysmic effect of the Battle of Britain darkening the skies and impacting on the peaceful community.

In the book, Baroness van Heemstra and Audrey's visits to the village, as well as their eventual departure, are described to the reader.

The book reads: "The children would stay for long periods and the local people got to know the strikingly attractive little girl with saucer eyes, called Audrey Ruston and known by the villagers as 'little Audrey'.

"She had been staying in Elham during the recent cold weather and attending the little private school run by the Rigdens.

"The family were in Arnhem and Mrs Butcher now received instructions to take Audrey to Gatwick Airport as she was to return to Holland in a Dutch plane.

"However, the plane skidded off the runway and got stuck in the Surrey clay and Audrey was brought back to Elham."

Other arrangements for Audrey to leave were made.

**A gardener at the Vicarage, remembered giving Audrey and the vicar's four daughters rides around the garden in his wheelbarrow.**

**Bryan Badham,**  
Elham Historical Society



**ICONIC:** Hepburn in one of the most famous poses in Hollywood history at Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

The book continues: "At Elham, Mrs Butcher was told that another flight had been arranged to take Audrey Ruston back to Holland and she was put on a plane at Shoreham in Sussex.

"The next time the villagers would see 'little Audrey' would be on the cinema screen as Audrey Hepburn - the girl with the 'elfin look' who starred in some of the finest films of the fifties and sixties."

Audrey was successfully united with her mother in Holland, which was a neutral country at the time.

However, despite a belief shared by many that the Netherlands would be safer than Britain, it was invaded by the Germans in May 1940 and fell within a week.

It was not liberated until 1945.

Audrey moved to London in 1948 and appeared in several films as well as performing in the 1951 Broadway production *Gigi*.

She went on to star in a number of successful films and remains one of the few people to have won an Academy, Emmy, Grammy, and Tony award.



**HIT:** With Rex Harrison in the classic *My Fair Lady*

continued on page 28





**CHILD:** 'Little Audrey' pictured at a performance in Elham circa 1936

She was awarded the Oscar for best actress for her iconic role as a royal princess in *Roman Holiday*.

The 1953 romantic comedy follows the adventures of Ann, a crown princess who is exploring the country alone.

The film took off, earning an estimated \$3m at the American box office during its first year of release and also scooping awards for both the screenplay and costume design.

The actress also won a record three BAFTA Awards for best British actress in a leading role.

After a very long and much celebrated career in the film industry, making some 30 movies, she became an ambassador for UNICEF – the world's leading organisation working for children and child's rights.

Audrey Hepburn died of cancer at her home in Switzerland at the age of 63.

## VICTOR MCLAGLEN: TOUGH GUY AND SPA TOWN'S ACADEMY AWARD WINNER

HE starred alongside the likes of John Wayne and Cary Grant in a film career which saw him appear in more than 100 movies.

And in 1936 he won an Academy Award for best actor in the same year that Bette Davis won the best actress award.

Yet the name of Victor McLaglen risks being lost in time.

Born in 1886 in Tunbridge Wells, he had a remarkable life which saw him spend time as a boxer, travel to South Africa, serve in the First World War, and then eventually pursue a hugely successful Hollywood career, which saw him appear in the likes of *The Quiet Man* (he was Oscar nominated as best supporting actor to John Wayne's lead), *The Informer* (where he won his Oscar), war classic *What Price Glory?* and adventure epic *Gunga Din* alongside Cary Grant and Douglas Fairbanks.

It was all a long way removed from his rather more humble, and traditional, upbringing in Kent.

His father was the bishop of the Free Protestant Episcopal Church of England.

After spending his formative years in the town, his family moved briefly to South Africa. With eight brothers and one sister, it was perhaps inevitable he would need to go the extra mile to stand out.

Having returned to the UK, when he was 14, he faked his age and signed up for the British Army

to fight in the Second Boer War.

But after a dull posting at Windsor Castle, the Army realised he was too young and he was booted out of the military.

From there it was a four year wait until he went to Canada and found a living by becoming a heavyweight boxer and wrestler.

He made a name for himself too, defeating the then-champion Jack Johnson in only six rounds.

There was also circus work that was an earner for him, but a nightmare for his opponents who were customers trying to win a few dollars by staying on their feet for three gruelling rounds.

When the First World War broke out, he returned to the UK to fulfil his childhood dream of serving in the Army. He was an acting Captain in the 10th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment, which was part of The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshire).

A decent military career followed during which he was military Provost Marshal for Baghdad.

There was still time for boxing and as the war ended, he was heavyweight champion of the British Army.

His real fame came as he left the Army and went into the movie industry, still silent at the time, making the role of the Irish drunk his own, with his flattened nose through boxing giving him much needed character.



**SUPERSTAR:** Victor McLaglen - winner of a best actor Oscar in 1936

From 1920 he starred in movies and later in TV too, including the likes of *Rawhide*.

The Oscar for best actor came with his role in *The Informer* in 1935, a year it had to do battle with *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

He had three wives starting with Enid in 1919 and their son Andrew became a director, often working with John Wayne. His grandchildren went the same

route. Enid died in 1942 following a horse riding accident.

A second marriage, to Suzanne, ran from 1943 to 1948 and his third wife Margaret – they wed the year of his divorce – outlived him.

By now, a naturalised American, Victor McLaglen died from a heart attack in 1959, aged 72.

He is buried in fashionable Glendale, California.

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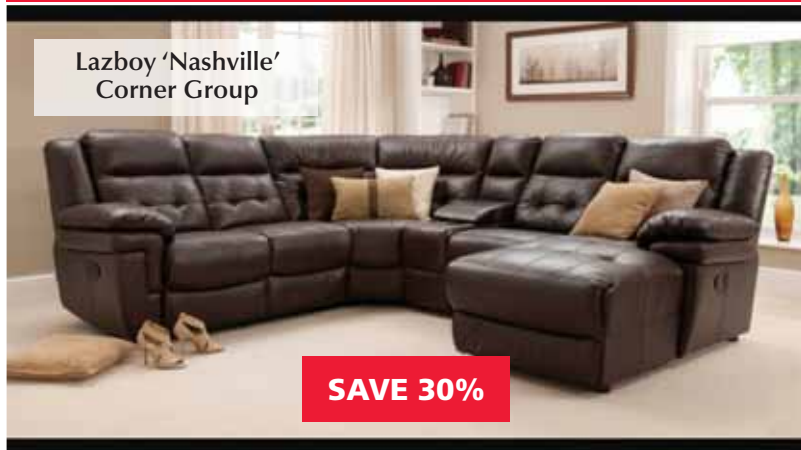
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# Is it time we consider building on our protected Green Belt land?

By Gilbert Green

Commercial Property Expert



**T**HE Green Belt is an emotive issue. Its proponents and opponents hold deeply entrenched views as to its purpose and future.

The concept of Green Belts emerged in post-war Britain under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. Their purpose was to provide a reserve of public open spaces for recreational purposes.

The policy was implemented in 1955, principally to stop the expansion of major conurbations. The policy has now been repeated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out five purposes of the Green Belt. This strengthens the view that the Green Belt is to be a barrier against the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

It is, therefore, clear that current policy on Green Belts has lost the initial rationale of their being recreational spaces for inner city dwellers – the “green lungs” of the city.

This policy is all well and good whilst there remains an adequate supply of housing land elsewhere. However, Britain is well below the targets for required new house construction, and has been for many years. There are a variety of reasons, the recent economic depression being one. However, a major factor has been the di-



minishing amount of “brown” or “already developed” land. In a country with a growing population, the demand for new housing is ever greater. If we are to meet this demand one area which requires review is the extent and purpose of the Green Belt.

The recent report issued by London First, Quod and SERC

reviews the purpose of Green belt in relation to London, and concludes whilst it continues to play an important role it is not a “sacred cow”. Carefully designed development can take place within the Green Belt in a manner compatible with its principle purpose. The report encourages all local authorities to review the size and bounda-

ries of their Green Belts and to make adjustments in their local plan reviews.

So how does this affect the inhabitants of the south east? Nearly all the local authorities have shortfalls in their housing allocations, and the number of new build homes delivered over the last few years is woefully below target. Many authorities are recognising the need to review Green Belt policies and are looking to allocate new development within the Green Belt which is sustainable and does not cause demonstrable harm.

Green Belt as a land use in the south east accounts for 16.6 per cent of land mass, whereas green space (ie. rural areas not designated as Green Belts) accounts for 84.8 per cent. There is, clearly, an amount of ‘green’ land available for development to ease the housing crisis without detrimentally affecting the amenity of the inhabitants.

The main question to be answered is how does an authority decide which area of Green Belt should be protected from

development. Authorities should look at the quality and current use of the land.

Land uses in the Green Belt are many and different and land quality is variable. Uses range from intensive agriculture, recreational use such as golf courses, commercial uses such as airports through to purely recreational uses such as parks and national parks. There are bound to be areas within the Green Belts that are of little public benefit or poor environmental quality.

If these are compatible with a sustainable form of residential development this should not be refused just because of Green Belt status.

There should not, therefore, be a policy of designating Green Belts with a uniform ‘circular’ shape as a specified barrier around urban settlements, but rather they should be reviewed and designated according to their merits.

Had this ‘educated’ approach been adopted in the 1947 and 1955 legislation we might well still have and enjoy villages which are sustainable commu-

nities, with shops, schools, pubs and village greens, rather than the dormitories many have become, whilst still retaining vibrant and viable green open spaces so typical of the ideal of the English countryside.

If we are now to meet the demands for housing in the south east we must view each Green Belt on its merits. Whilst it is to be preferred, where possible, for development to take place on brown-field sites this should not exclude as a matter of immutable policy the possibility of Green Belt development.

■ Gilbert Green is a partner in commercial property at Kent law firm Thomson Snell and Passmore.

**What do you think? Do you think we should re-examine our approach to Green Belt land?**

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# Tonbridge's history explored as society reveals its magnum opus

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

A HOST of fascinating images charting the history of Tonbridge, alongside the results of three years of research by local historians, has gone on sale.

Gathered together in the book *Tonbridge Through 10 Centuries*, it traces the development of the town from a tiny community based around its historic castle in the 11 century to a bustling commuter town with 30,000 inhabitants by the end of the 20th.

Compiled by the town's historical society, topics featured include the building of the castle, rebellions and civil war, the canalising of the Medway, the coming of the railway, Victorian disease and squalor, and the impact of two world wars.

The text is supported by 300 illustrations, many of them from the historical society's own archives.

The book is only the second general history of the town ever published – the first was nearly 40 years ago.

Chairman of the Tonbridge Historical Society, George Buswell, said: "Tonbridge has badly needed a book like this, and I am delighted our socie-

ty has been able to bring together the resources and expertise to fill that gap.

"Tonbridge has a long and eventful history and we think that many local people will find this book an interesting and enjoyable read."

The historical society was founded in 1960 and regularly hosts talks on all aspects of history at the town's Angel Centre.

It has produced six books, although admits this recent volume is its most ambitious to date.

The book was given an official launch at the castle recently. Among those attending were the town's long serving Conservative MP, Sir John Stanley.

A key figure himself in the town's history, he has served as Tonbridge and Malling's Westminster representative since 1974.

He will stand down at May's upcoming election.

Writing in his foreword to the book, Sir John wrote: "I commend its admirably readable text and fascinating photographs... which will appeal, and be of value, to every age-group in our community from school-children to the elderly".

Leader of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Nicolas Heslop, added: "It has been a revelation reading just a few of the snippets of history



**SNAPS:** The High Street before it was widened in the 1960s (above) and, right, a scene from the High Street in the 19th century

in this book – and the presentation makes it so easy to dip in and discover something new and fascinating each time you open it.

"This book will be a 'must have' on many people's reading list - and one that the people of Tonbridge will be proud to

show to visiting friends and relations."

■ *Tonbridge Through 10 Centuries* is available from the Tourist Office (Gateway) at Tonbridge Castle, Mr Books Bookshop at 142 High Street, Tonbridge, and from Amazon, price £9.50.

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# Remembering the big beasts and bigger names of Maidstone zoo

Superstars like Julie Andrews, Gracie Fields and Petula Clark made special visits, and for more than 20 years it was one of the county's top tourist attractions. **Maria Chiorando** delves in the history books

**F**OUR o'clock was the lions' feeding time – and their roars could be heard stretching across several villages in Maidstone.

They lived in the county town's zoo – an often forgotten tourist attraction which once pulled in thousands of visitors.

It opened in 1934 and was part of the Cobtree estate in Sandling – today the site has morphed into Cobtree Manor Park.

Within five years, it was home to 36 kinds of animal including polar bears, monkeys and elephants, and attracted thousands of visitors every year.

Such was the appeal of the venue, special celebrity guests would come to open the zoo at the beginning of every season, including Gracie Fields, Petula Clark and Julie Andrews.

Ray Sturgeon is a local historian, who has an enormous personal archive of photos of the attraction.

"When I talk to people of my era, as soon as I mention Maidstone Zoo, they remember it," he says.

"I loved it, and have thousands of memories. Most vivid is probably the time when I went to see Richard Dimbleby [famous broadcaster, father of David and Jonathan] doing a special opening there in 1952. It was so packed, that my friend and I couldn't see anything, so being boys, what did we do? We decided to climb up a tree.

"The style at the time was to wear windcheaters – very brightly coloured jackets with zips, which we were both in, so were highly visible.

"Next thing we knew, we appeared in a news reel, two kids in a tree – you don't forget something like that."

The man who created the zoo was Maidstone-born Sir Hugh Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake, described as a 'legend' and often seen driving around in his Rolls-Royce.

"I'm sure it can't be the case," Mr Sturgeon, "but at one point it seemed like you couldn't go out in town with-

**MAIDSTONE ZOO:** Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake with Gert and Daisy

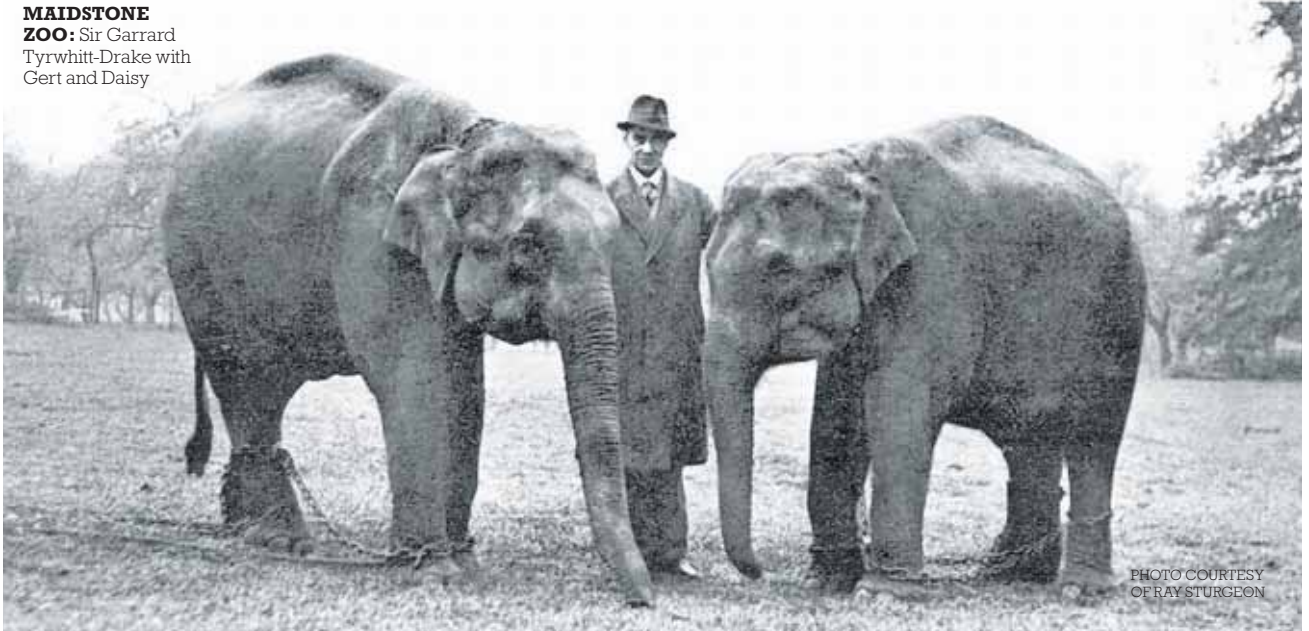


PHOTO COURTESY OF RAY STURGEON

out seeing Sir Hugh driving around in that car."

He was a businessman, zoo owner and author, as well as being the mayor of Maidstone some 12 times between 1915 and 1950, and was High Sheriff of Kent in 1956–57.

Sir Hugh was born in Maidstone on May 22 in 1881, the only child of Hugh William Tyrwhitt-Drake, a brewery manager, and his wife Anne.

As a young man, he was a director of several companies, including the Medway Lower Navigation Company, and was heavily involved in local politics, serving on the council of the borough of Maidstone for 48 years.

He became an honorary freeman of the borough in 1930, and in 1936 was knighted for political and public services to Kent.

After being appointed a deputy lieutenant of Kent in 1945, he became the high sheriff for 1956–57.

But it was his zoo for which many will remember him.

Adds Ray Sturgeon: "We knew the area like the back of our hand, and would find ways to get in there without paying the entrance fee – considering how often we went, we would sneak in there quite a bit.

"Our favourite animals were probably the monkeys, who used to get up to all sorts of things. Also, they often had babies, and it was lovely to see the baby monkeys in the group.

"I also loved the elephants – they had Gert and Daisy. There were also a couple of others that I didn't realise were there at the time, but one was called Sally and was unveiled by Gracie

Fields.

"Sadly, none of them lived very long lives."

Compared with today's high levels of animal welfare, the images of Maidstone Zoo may well suggest why those animals didn't last long.

There's nothing to suggest it mistreated animals, but many were kept in small cages.

An exhibition about the zoo was hosted last year by popular tourist attraction Kent Life, formerly Kent Life Museum, which now occupies the site, where the elephant house can still be seen.


Kent Life's Emily Hirons said: "Although it closed to the public in 1959, people tell us they can remember visiting the zoo and what a fantastic day out it was.

"It was one of Kent's biggest tourist attractions in its day so we thought it would be great to celebrate it."

Mr Sturgeon contributed many of his pictures towards the exhibition, which also featured programmes and entrance tickets, zoo memorabilia and even cine film footage of people visiting the zoo and the animals that were kept there.

"I was very pleased to see the pictures used," he says. "It's such an important piece of local history."

**■ Do you remember Maidstone Zoo? Did you visit it? Did you see any of the famous names appear? Why not share your memories with us? Write to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**



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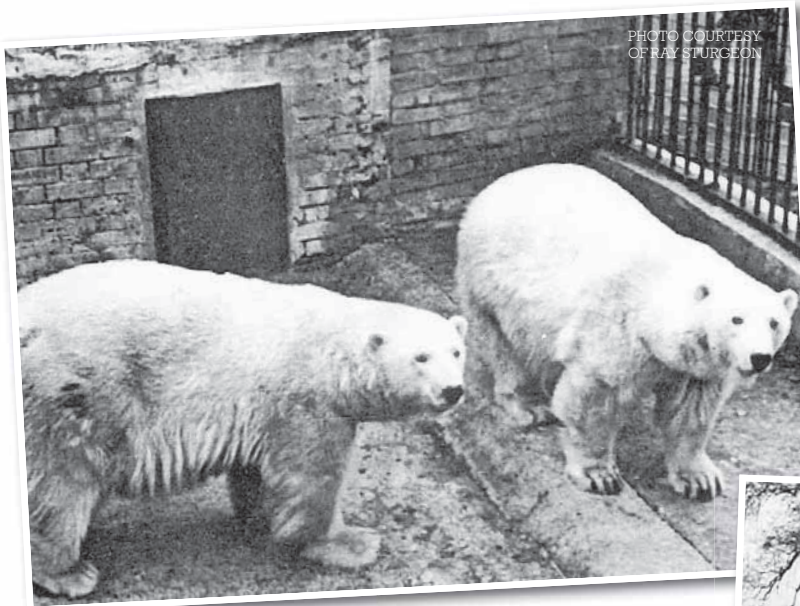


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**MEMORIES:**  
Maidstone Zoo, which in its time was one of the county's biggest attractions  
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# Comics Reeves and Mortimer to perform 25th anniversary tour

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

**I**NFLUENTIAL comedy duo Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer are to stage their first tour of the UK in 20 years as part of a special anniversary jaunt to mark their first appearance on our screens.

Both stars have spent much of the years since they hit the big time in Kent.

Vic Reeves, 56, real name Jim Moir, lives in Charing with his wife Nancy Sorrell. The couple married at Eastwell Manor, near Ashford, and their children were born in the William Harvey Hospital.

Side-kick Bob Mortimer, 55, lives in Tunbridge Wells.

The comedy duo both used to live and work around Ashford - and during their hey-day could often be spotted working from their office window overlooking the High Street.

In addition, for their sketch show The Smell of Reeves and Mortimer, scenes were shot in and around the county - including outside the Airport Cafe in Sellindge, near Hythe.

They have pursued solo careers, with both dabbling in acting and TV work away from their partnership.



**START:** Vic and Bob in their ground-breaking comedy show Big Night Out which first aired in 1990 on Channel 4

Vic Reeves has staged a number of art exhibitions in the county.

Most recently they appeared in the sit-com House of Fools on BBC2 which they both wrote and star in.

Now, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Channel 4 screening Vic Reeves' Big Night Out - which gave the duo a cult following - they are taking to the road again for a string of big shows across the UK.

It will include characters from their

TV debut as well as their subsequent comedy shows including the likes of Shooting Stars.

Mr Mortimer said: "Playing in front of a living audience is where it all began for us. Some people feel most alive when they are on fire or in Turkey, but for us the stage is where we thrive."

"I will ensure that Vic arrives at all dates smartly dressed and unarmed. I promise not to mention football, JLS

or apricots during the performances."

The tour begins on November 11 in Glasgow before visiting a host of cities, among them Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, Cardiff and Brighton.

London shows have not yet been announced but it is expected they will be added in the coming days.

Vic Reeves, born in Darlington, started his comedy career when he performed at clubs in south London. After uniting with Bob Mortimer in



**NOW:** In the BBC's House of Fools

the mid-1980s their Big Night Out show was spotted and put on to TV screens.

During the early 1990s, Vic Reeves also embarked on a short-lived but successful pop career, topping the charts alongside indie band The Wonderstuff, with a cover of the song Dizzy, before releasing a solo album and a top 10 hit with Born Free.

Tickets for the tour went on sale on Friday.

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HETAS



# 'Provincial Punk' sets out stall

Award-winning Grayson Perry is latest big name to hold exhibition at Margate's Turner Contemporary



**ARTIST:** Grayson Perry poses with one of his trademark ceramic pots. Also pictured are some the controversial cross-dressing artist's other works - many of which will be part of the exhibition

**C**ONTROVERSIAL artist Grayson Perry will bring his new exhibition to the county later this year.

The creative, perhaps best known for his cross-dressing alter-ego Claire, as well as winning the prestigious Turner Prize in 2003 with his ceramics, will be presenting Provincial Punk at the Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate in May.

Mr Perry, 54, a married father-of-one, was made a CBE in 2013 for this contribution to contemporary art, and remains one of the nation's most compelling and challenging artists.

He is best known for his ceramic vases and the illustrations which appear upon them - some of which are thought provoking and explicit.

His arrival at the Turner Contemporary is another major boost to the gallery which continues to attract the biggest names from the UK art scene to exhibit.

Tracey Emin, who grew up in Margate, has been a frequent visitor and art fan the Duchess of Cambridge will be visiting the Self exhibition which is currently running next week.

According to the gallery, the Grayson Perry exhibition, which will run until September, is 'rooted in the development of Grayson Perry's practice in the early-1980s and the idea of provincial punk as an anti-elitist and teasingly unfashionable spirit of creativity that has consistently driven his practice'.

Mr Perry is famous for his artworks that combine autobiographical reference with social commentary on themes ranging from class, taste, consumerism and war, to art versus craft.

He generally works in pottery, creating clay vases that he then decorates



**GALLERY:** The Turner Contemporary is attracting many top name artists

with provocative imagery.

The artist said: "I was a punk in the provincial sense. I was there in my bedroom with an old school shirt stencilling the word 'hate' onto it, looking out onto the lush turf of the north Essex countryside.

"Then, when I came to London, I was hanging out with people who were at the cutting edge of fashion - John Maybury, Cerith Wyn Evans, Steven Jones and Michael Clark were part of my social circle at the time.

"And yet I was making pottery; with a Shetland woolly jumper view of the world and that was funny.

"The idea of 'Provincial Punk' is an oxymoron but it encapsulates creatively to turn things over, to not accept the fashion and to have a bit of fun. It is a kind of teasing rebellion; it is not a violent revolution."

"It is a very creative force, a willingness to turn things over, to not accept the fashion and to have a bit of fun. It is a kind of teasing rebellion; it is not a violent revolution."

Mr Perry, was born in Chelmsford, Essex in 1960, his father left the family

after his mother's infidelity. The artist has described this as the one thing that had the biggest impact on his work.

After graduating with a BA in fine art at Portsmouth Polytechnic in 1982, he lived a hand-to-mouth existence in squats in London, sharing a house with milliner Stephen Jones and cultural icon Boy George.

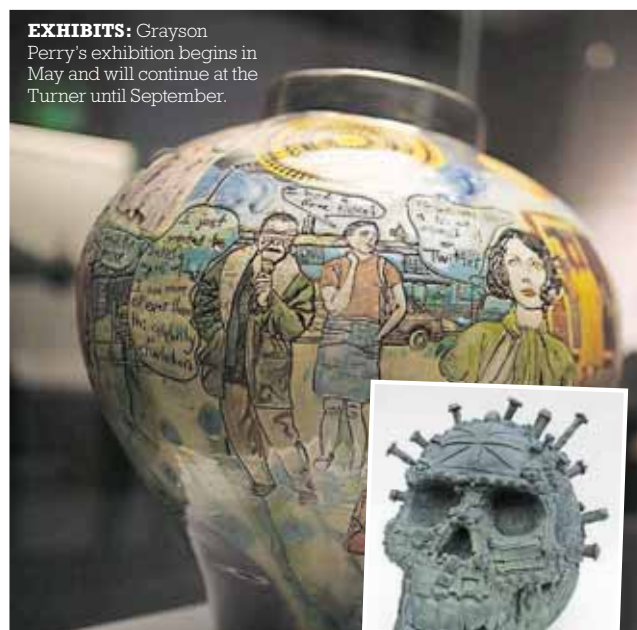
He started pottery lessons in September 1983 at the Central Institute and had his first exhibition of ceramics that December - over the next 20 years, he had various showcases of his work, culminating in his winning the Turner Prize in 2003.

He collected the prize dressed as alter-ego Claire and admits he has enjoyed dressing up in women's clothing since he was a teenager.

He has won a BAFTA for Best Specialist Factual Programme in 2013 for his three part documentary All in the Best Possible Taste.

The Margate exhibition will feature a display of ceramic pots, including some of his earliest works from the late

**EXHIBITS:** Grayson Perry's exhibition begins in May and will continue at the Turner until September.



1980s through to the present day, as well as previously unseen collaged and watercolour painted sketchbooks from the 1980s that mix confessional diary, sexual fantasy and political critique.

These are shown with rarely seen super-8 films, including Bungalow Depression (1984) and The Poor Girl (1985), set against a backdrop of Thatcherite Britain.

A number of recent tapestries are also being shown, including The Walthamstow Tapestry (2009), which depicts a journey from birth to death told through consumer brands,

alongside etchings including Map of an Englishman (2004) and Print for a Politician (2005).

According to the artist, he has been consistent with the themes he has depicted over the years.

He says: "Even at college I see most of the things I am interested in now: the religious, ritual element, the social issues and the decorative.

"It is just a matter of sophistication and craft skills that develop."





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**EXOTIC:** Lorca's  
play is full of drama



## Spanish flair and Victorian decadence at county town

The Hazlitt Theatre is looking forward to some innovative programming...

**T**HE Hazlitt Theatre in Maidstone is inviting two award-winning theatre companies to tread its boards in May.

Theatre San Frontiers brings *Amor en el Jardin* (Love in the Garden) by Spanish playwright Federico García Lorca, while the European Arts Company presents *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a novel by Oscar Wilde adapted for the stage by Mr Wilde's grandson Merlin Holland and John O'Connor.

Federico García Lorca is often considered to be Spain's greatest writer of the 20th century.

He is thought to have been shot and killed by Nationalist militia on August 19, 1936, just after the outbreak of the Spanish civil war.

It is debated whether this is due to his left-wing politics, or homosexuality, both of which were

considered taboo at the time.

*Amor en el Jardin* tells the fantastical story of Don Perlimplin, a wealthy and studious man who wants to spend his days quietly reading books.

Reluctantly, Don Perlimplin agrees to marry the gorgeous and much younger Belisa - but what has he let himself in for?

Theatre San Frontiers brings its unique visual and physical style to this tragicomic production.

The show is performed in Spanish with English subtitles to complement its live music and larger-than-life characters.

There will be a pre-show performance of Spanish songs by Alicia Martel in the foyer/bar from 7pm.

European Arts Company is a national and international touring company which has been based at the Hazlitt Theatre for 13 years.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is written by Oscar Wilde, probably best known for his comedic plays including *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *An Ideal Husband*.

The story is set in the decadent world of Victorian London.

A beautiful, narcissistic young man becomes infatuated by the exquisite portrait that has been painted of him. He makes a Faustian pact that he will remain forever young while the picture grows old.

The production is touring to 55 venues all over the UK, finishing in London on the exact date 125 years ago that the novel was published.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* features a host of familiar faces including Guy Warren-Thomas as Dorian Gray (*Spooks*, *The Greater Good*, *Downton Abbey*), Gwynfor Jones as Lord Henry (*The Woman*

*In Black* in the West End, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Oldham Coliseum), Rupert Mason as Basil Hallward (*EastEnders*, *A Touch of Frost* and most recently *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* for EAC).

Helen Keeley features as Sybil Vane (*The Importance of Being Earnest*, London Classic Theatre, *To The End*, Southwark Playhouse). The piece is directed by Peter Craze (*Doctor Who*, *Blake's Seven*).

Lorca *Amor en el Jardin* takes place on May 9 at 7.30pm.

Exchange Studio tickets cost £11 or £10 for concessions.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is on May 21 at 7.30pm.

Tickets cost £13, with concessions available for £11. To book, or for further information, contact the Hazlitt Theatre box office on 01622 758611 or visit the website at [www.hazlitttheatre.com](http://www.hazlitttheatre.com).



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# Chart-topper Odell to perform in Kent forest

By Molly Kersey  
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

TALENTED artist Tom Odell will be touring the nation's forests this year - and he has announced that a special guest will be joining him.

The chart-topper has announced multiple dates as part of Forestry Commission's Forest Live, which will see him perform in seven spectacular woodland venues across the country.

He will be performing at Bedgebury Pinetum, near Tunbridge Wells, on June 19.

After it was released in June 2013, Mr Odell's debut album Long Way Down shot straight to number one.

He achieved the ultimate industry accolade of Songwriter of the Year at the 2014 Ivor Novello Awards as well as previously winning the BRITs Critics' Choice Award for 2013.

Commenting on his forest gigs, he said: "This will be a whole new experience for me."

"I can't wait to bring my live show to the woods and I hope to see you there."

Mr Odell will be joined on stage



by Rae Morris.

She has previously recorded with artists including Bombay Bicycle Club and Clean Bandit.

Ms Morris is one of the featured artists in the BBC's Music Sound of 2015, which aims to showcase rising stars, and her debut album Unguarded made the top 10 in the UK album charts on its release.

She said: "I supported Tom on a sold out UK indoor venue tour previously, so I am delighted he has invited me along again and this time to perform in such

beautiful and unique locations. "It should be a lot of fun."

Forest Live is an independent programme organised by the Forestry Commission to bring forests to new audiences.

Income generated from ticket sales is spent on protecting, improving and expanding England's forests and woodlands and increasing their value to people and wildlife.

Tickets are £34.50.

Call 03000 680400 or visit forestry.gov.uk/music to book.



**TALENTED:** Tom Odell will perform. Credit: Andrew Whitton



**UNIQUE:** Forest Live brings forests to new audiences.

## Comedy stars due in town

JOE Pasquale will be at the Theatre Royal Margate on August 18 at 7.30pm.

Comedy impressionist Paul Burling will guest star.

To book, call the box office on 01843 292795.



## Jekyll and Hyde explored

CULT classic Jekyll and Hyde will be performed at The Woodville, Gravesend, on March 11.

Robert Louis Stevenson's tale will be brought to life in a modern adaptation by Jo Clifford and touring company Sell A Door.

For details, visit [www.woodville.co.uk](http://www.woodville.co.uk)

## Kent hosts unique show

CIRCLES, a unique theatre experience involving physical theatre, storytelling and an immersive soundtrack, will be at the Marlowe Studio, Canterbury on March 18.

To book, call 01227 787787.



## Uganda choir to perform

A CHOIR of children who have travelled all the way from Uganda will be performing their brand new production Oh What Love at the Junior School Hall, Bromley High School.

The Watoto Children's Choir will perform at 7pm and the show is hosted by the Lighthouse Christian Centre.

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[www.sanctuaryofhealing.co.uk](http://www.sanctuaryofhealing.co.uk)



## All star wrestling at Leas

ALL STAR Wrestling will be rumbling into the Leas Cliff Hall on March 20 at 7pm.

Tickets are available now. For more information or to book, call the Leas Cliff Hall box office on 0844 871 3015.



## CBeebies star in new play

DIRECT from the smash hit CBeebies series, Tree Fu Tom will be starring in a new show at Margate Winter Gardens on April 19 at 1pm.

Packed with music, fun and audience participation, the show sees superhero Tom take to the stage for the first time in a family-friendly production. Call 01843 292795.

## Death and drugs in show

JET black comedy Mojo will be performed at the Gravesend Theatre Guild on March 28.

Featuring death, drugs and rock 'n' roll, it tells the story of a group of young men in Soho.

To book, call 07738416183.



## EastEnders star in town

CHARLIE Brooks, best known as Janine Butcher from EastEnders, will star in Beautiful Thing at the Marlowe Theatre.

The play captures what it is like to be a teenager and fall in love.

It will be in Canterbury on March 23 and 24. Call 01227 787787 for tickets.

# Romance and dance as play sails into town

By Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

COLE Porter's classical musical comedy Anything Goes will be sailing into The Orchard Theatre next month.

Daniel Evans will be directing the uplifting production, which features song, dance and romance.

The show tells the story of Billy Crocker and his antics on an ocean liner that is bound from New York to London after he falls in love at first sight with a woman that he meets in a taxi.

After he discovers that his heart's desire- debutante heiress Hope Harcourt, is engaged to an English aristocrat, he stows away aboard the S.S American in a desperate bid to win her heart.

Aided by a string of eccentric passengers on board the luxurious transatlantic liner during his madcap quest, will he be able to succeed before they reach Southampton?

Leading the cast of 26 will be Debbie Kurup and Matt Rawle.

Ms Kurup, who was most recently seen as Nicki in the West End hit musical The Bodyguard,



will be taking on the role of Reno Sweeney.

Matt Rawle, whose West End credits include Les Miserables and Miss Saigon, will play the love-struck Billy Crocker.

They will be joined on stage by Shuan Williamson as Moonface Martin, Kate Anthony as Evangeline Harcourt with Simon Rouse as Elisha Whitney and Zoe Rainey as Hope Harcourt.

The colourful show features an array of tap dancing sailors, comedy capers, mob bosses and

heroines.

The music and dance production includes hit songs such as I Get a Kick Out Of You, You're The Top, It's De-Lovely and the title song Anything Goes.

It will be performed at The Orchard Theatre from April 27 to May 2.

Performances will take place at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

For more information or to book tickets, visit [www.orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.orchardtheatre.co.uk) or alternatively you can call the ticket office on 01322 220000.



**EXCITING:** Debbie Kurup will perform. Credit: Johan Persson



**COLOURFUL:** Hit songs are featured. Credit: Johan Persson

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# Bringing the best of American baking to the UK

Founder of the Hummingbird Bakery, Tarek Malouf, talks about his love of all things very sweet ...

**F**MARY Berry is the reigning queen of baking, then Tarek Malouf is surely next in line to the throne.

The founder of the exceedingly good Hummingbird Bakery brought cupcakes back into fashion, when he opened the first of his six bakeries back in 2004, and is just about to publish his fourth – and very eagerly-awaited – cookbook, *Life Is Sweet*.

It's the result of a three-week road trip in October 2013, around his spiritual baking home, America, which took him from New York to Atlanta, New Orleans and Dallas. He stayed with friends and relatives, and demanded one thing: that they show him the best desserts in town.

"Many of the recipes are regional or

known in an area in the US, but not known here in the UK," he says.

"Because American bakery is not too familiar to British people, it's the equivalent of me writing a book on Indian cookery or Thai cookery – you're teaching a new audience about something that's already in existence that's amazing, and you want them to experience it yourself."

They all feature names that defy your mouth not to water: Goopy Butter Cake, Molasses Pecan Crumb Cake, Red Velvet Ice Cream and Alabama Little Layer Cake, and those looking to wow their mums this Mother's Day would do well to seek inspiration among the book's brightly coloured pages.

"The rise is home baking is really nice to see," adds Lebanese-born Mr



**SWEET:** Honey cornbread cupcakes

Malouf, who moved to London when he was two.

"People are rediscovering the fun you can have making things yourself, and you get more adulation from friends and family when you bring in cookies or a big cake, rather than savoury food. There's more of a wow factor, and people are always excited."

For Mr Malouf, the roots of American baking are steeped in traditional British recipes, but with added ingredients over the years, from the country's rich melting pot of natives and immigrants.

By his own admission, he and his sister grew up in "an American bubble", both attending an American school in Central London.

"American baking is fascinating to

me, I love it," he says. "We used to visit the US once a year, and I have a couple of aunts and cousins who live there, so we used to stay with them. And I have a very sweet tooth, so between school and friends' houses, and visiting and baking with my relatives, I developed a real taste for American desserts and cakes."

Of course, Mr Malouf has been asked countless times since launching Hummingbird Bakery, whether the cupcake trend is going to last – and 11 years on, he's still convinced it's not a passing fad.

"They appeal because they're smaller, you're eating it yourself, so you can be picky with the flavour. It's just a better version of a fairy cake, and hopefully not as dry!"

## Some Mersey sounds

**C**ELEBRATING the 50th anniversary of A Hard Day's Night, the Magic of the Beatles is about to hit town.

The show features the music by the fab four, John, Paul, George and Ringo and comes to the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone on April 18 at 7.30pm.

For more information, call the box office on 0844 871 3015 or visit [www.atgtickets.com/Folkestone](http://www.atgtickets.com/Folkestone).

## Nelson in Canterbury

**C**OMEDY character Lee Nelson will bring his Suited and Booted tour to The Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury next month.

The show, which is performed by Simon Brodwin in the guise of his most famous creation, takes place on April 8.

Tickets cost £20.75.

For more information, or to book, call the box office on 01227 787787 or visit the theatre website at [www.marlowetheatre.com](http://www.marlowetheatre.com).

## Circus of horrors

**T**HE Night of the Zombie will be coming to Margate's Winter Gardens on March 12.

The show, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, takes place in a dark, corpse-ridden, London in the year 2020.

Tickets cost between £18 and £22.

For more information, call the box office on 01843 292795 or visit the theatre's website at [www.margatewintergardens.co.uk](http://www.margatewintergardens.co.uk).

## Alt-pop at the Forum

**L**UCY Rose is a London-based alt-pop singer-songwriter who has also performed back-up vocals for Bombay Bicycle Club.

She will be performing at the The Forum in Tunbridge Wells on March 9.

Key songs include Bikes, Middle Of The Bed and Red Face, as well as the album *Like I Used To*, issued in 2012.

For more information, call 0871 277 7101.

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# Staycationing with the power elite

## TRAVEL REVIEW: Cotswolds

By James Tapsfield

TAKE a loved-up couple, a quaint cottage, and some of the most picturesque, peaceful countryside England has to offer.

Great, right? Now spool forward a few years, add two small children and some more stress lines into the mix.

Still great? This was the question we set out to answer, packing four-year-old Evie and her 10-month old sister Alice into the car, along with the usual array of tablet computers, cuddly toys and wet wipes.

Two hours and a fair amount of screaming later, we arrived in the Cotswolds to find the sun shining.

"Wow," said Evie, momentarily distracted from watching Disney's Frozen for the umpteenth time. "The Cotswolds are really beautiful."

For the uninitiated, the Cotswolds refers to around 800 square miles west of Oxford.

During the industrial revolution, the area was a major centre for the wool trade. But now, it's the rolling hills, distinctive architecture, and relative proximity to London which have made it a favourite haunt for holidaymakers, celebrities and the power elite.

Prime minister David Cameron is often tagged as a member of the so-called 'Chipping Norton Set' - a circle of friends with homes near the market town. Others include Top Gear presenter Jeremy Clarkson and former Sun editor Rebekah Brooks.

Our base for exploration was Steanbridge Farm Barn in Slad, near the pretty town of Painswick.

Big windows accentuate the stunning scenery, and the open plan living space meant we could prepare meals and still keep an eye on Alice toddling around. A short (but steep) stroll takes you to a mill pond, where the girls delighted in chucking



**VARIETY:** The Cotswolds has lots of activities on offer, all in beautiful surroundings

bread at the local ducks.

Stroud, just a 10 minute drive away, hosts an impressive farmer's market on Saturday mornings - as well as a cinema, if you feel like escaping the great outdoors. But we made a beeline for Painswick, for an authentic taste of Cotswolds life.

A slap up lunch at the Falcon pub and a coffee stop at Olivias deli (narrowly managing to resist the enormous slabs of chocolate cake) did

much to soothe away parental stress.

And the Rococo garden attached to the manor house offered more simple pleasures - with frivolous Georgian follies, tasteful modern sculptures and even a hedge maze. If you are celebrating a special occasion, or just feel like a treat, it's well worth considering enlisting the services of the Chipping Norton Tea Set.

This wittily-named enterprise will deliver afternoon tea to your cottage,

and even serve it up.

We invited grandparents to nip over the border from Wales to join us, and enjoyed a sumptuous selection of sandwiches, lemon drizzle cake, and scones smothered in clotted cream and jam.

That experience, stuffing our faces on the terrace as we gazed out over the verdant valley, was hard to top for the adult contingent.

But the best part of the visit for Evie and Alice was the day we spent at the

### TRAVEL FACTS

■ James Tapsfield stayed in Steanbridge Farm Barn with [www.manorcottages.co.uk](http://www.manorcottages.co.uk). Stays at this cottage start from £537 for a three-night midweek or weekend break in April. For more information, visit [www.manorcottages.co.uk](http://www.manorcottages.co.uk). For more information and tickets to the Cotswold Wildlife Park, see [www.cotswoldswildlifepark.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldswildlifepark.co.uk)

Cotswold Wildlife Park, about a 45 minute drive away in Burford.

We invested in a model iguana for Evie early on, and she took great trouble to make sure "Iggy" got a prime view of the giraffes, lions, rhinos and other exotic specimens on show.

The lemur enclosure, where you can get up close to the enchanting Madagascan creatures without any barriers, was amazing.

Alice also developed an obsession with the impossibly cute meerkats, complaining bitterly when we had to leave them to their own devices.

Just when the grown ups were getting a bit frazzled, we came across the adventure playground. That bought us at least two hours of relative peace as Evie raised merry hell on the fantastic forts, threw herself head first down slides, and did monkey impressions on the climbing frames.

With all that on offer, it felt like good value at around £40 for a family of four - and the picnic potential means you don't even need to shell out for lunch if you don't want to.

So, the "Cotswolds" - still as great with kids? Definitely.

Although I wouldn't mind trying it again without them, just to be sure.

## Film Reviews by Damon Smith



### STILL ALICE (12A, 101 mins) Drama/Romance

MEMORIES are twinkling stars in a celestial map linking our past, present and future.

Some of these glittering orbs dim naturally over time, such as first experiences from childhood, while others are temporarily obscured

by the fog of modern life, like when we forget a friend's birthday, what we dreamt last night, or to water the plants.

Alzheimer's is an incurable neurodegenerative disease that slowly robs a patient of the ability to see these stars and chart a safe passage back to the people they love.

Names and faces of friends and family fade to black.

For those left behind, staring into the unblinking eyes of a close relative who no longer recognises you, is an anguish that defies words.

Based on the novel by Lisa Genova, Still Alice simply, yet powerfully, conveys the emotional devastation for the central character and the ripple effect for her family.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS (15, 91 mins) Comedy/Romance

UNFINISHED Business is a preposterous story of a family man, who risks everything - including his dignity - to close a business deal.

Jokes fall uncomfortably flat and half-hearted attempts to empower Franco's sweet, trusting character are constantly undermined by mean-spirited jibes at his expense that leave a nasty taste in the mouth.

Vaughn, Wilkinson and Franco catalyse lukewarm screen chemistry while British star Frost may never recover from the indignities afforded him.

### KILL THE MESSENGER (15, 112 mins) Thriller

A CRUSADING journalist faces a barrage of personal attacks as he uncovers links between the CIA and Nicaraguan Contras in this taut thriller.

It is based on the rise and fall of a



real-life investigative reporter.

Gary Webb works for the San Jose Mercury News and publishes an eye-catching article about the DEA and drug trafficking, which leads to a meeting with Coral Baca.

She provides Gary with explosive information about an undercover DEA operation to bring down drugs kingpin Ricky Ross (Michael K Williams) with help from

one-time Nicaraguan trafficker Danilo Blandon (Yul Vazquez).

He pens an incendiary three-part expose entitled Dark Alliance, which connects the Contras and the CIA with the rise of cocaine in American cities.

The US government vehemently denies the allegations and Webb faces a relentless smear campaign against his journalistic integrity.



IT'S ALL very well joining the 'grow your own' brigade – but what if your tomatoes don't taste sweet, your beans are stringy and your chillis lack punch?

Before you head back to the vegetable racks at the supermarket, take some advice from TV gardening expert James Wong, who has just written RHS Grow For Flavour, a very interesting little tome with tricks in it to make your crops much tastier.

"The things you aim to do for fruit may be the exact opposite of what you want to do for some vegetables. To get fruit to be more concentrated and sweeter, you need to reduce the water content of the plant, whereas with salad crops, you don't want dried-out lettuce, you want it to be as full of water as possible.

"However, in general, the less you water and the less you fertilise and the sunnier the spot, the better your crops will taste."

He challenges some traditional methods, advising us to pinch out the top of our tomato plants after they have set their first truss, to pick broad beans when they are tender and eat them like mangetout, and to use a dilute of molasses (which looks like thick, black syrup, available online as a horse supplement) to boost your crops grown in the ground.

Tomatoes happen to be a bugbear of mine. Every year, I grow them and every year they get late blight. Wong admits he was in the same boat but he's finally cracked it. "Firstly, there are some varieties that are much more tolerant to blight than others (he cites



**DELICIOUS:** James Wong [inset] gives his tips on how to yield a delicious crop

## The Wong way to grow veg...

Crimson Crush as an example), but another solution is one-truss training (pinching out the top of the plants after they have set their first truss of fruit, turning them into dwarf plants). This works because the fruit are produced so much earlier in the year so they are generally harvested before late blight occurs.

"Per plant, you end up with one in-

stead of four trusses, but per square metre of beds you get exactly the same yield. The fruit from one-truss training are bigger, sweeter, contain more antioxidants and they are a better colour.

"As these dwarf plants can be packed in far closer together, their total yield in a given area stays the same."

He says heirloom varieties aren't necessarily superior. "When I did my

flavour trials, I was astounded by how few heirloom varieties made it to the top. Flavour is largely about genetics but if you have a modern variety bred specifically for flavour, it can out-compete or at least match any heirloom type.

"Take Sungold tomatoes or Mara de Bois strawberries, both famed for knock-out aroma. Their quirky looks

and unique taste mean they are often referred to as 'heritage' types, but they were both actually bred as recently as the 1990s.

"Likewise, lovers of sweetcorn will know that modern 'supersweet' hybrids can be up to 10 times more sugary than old 'favourites'. To say that heirlooms always taste better is nothing more than horticultural ageism."

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## Crossing should be kept open

THE Open Spaces Society, which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, strongly opposes the possible closure of the Glebe Way railway crossing in Whitstable where a teenager was sadly hit by a train.

It would be perverse to close a very popular, well used crossing inexistence for generations because a small number of people do not obey the rules.

In our view, all efforts should be concentrated on education to prevent further accidents not emotional over reaction to one accident.

**Graham Wanstall,**  
Dover

## Gleaning used to be way of life

I WAS on holiday in Folkestone last week and came across the Kent on Sunday and read your very interesting article about gleaning.

I was evacuated during the war to a place called Billingbough in Lincolnshire.

And when the time came for the farmers to harvest, we used to go and glean.

It was when the corn was cut and thrashed we would go and collect the corn which was left in the field.

We did the same with potatoes, carrots and onions. It was great fun. We would have a picnic, work and play.

**Trudy Clifford,**  
Exmouth

## Registering my library concern

WITH reference to the consultation of the library and related services, I am not at all sure that it is a good idea to hive off the registration service (ie the office of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships) to the voluntary sector as that is so obviously an official service.

If the library and archives service is to be hived off in that way, then the registration service should be separated from it and dealt with in a different way.

At the same time, the registration of birth and deaths should be separated from the registration of civil marriages and civil partnerships.

That would effectively deal with the sort of cases that have occurred in recent years in which registrars (even long-standing ones) have been made to act against their consciences in a way which many of us find unacceptable.

I am not sure that I agree with those who say that cuts will result from hiving off the libraries as I suspect that the current political

## LETTER OF THE WEEK



## Fight back against airport expansion

THE 'Check the Facts' document from Biggin Hill Airport delivered to homes and denigrating opposition views leaves me horrified. There appears to be a complete ignorance or rejection of what is important for residents across Bromley borough.

How can the airport avoid mentioning a flight path that crosses 200,000 residents, across Locksbottom, Crofton, Knoll, Petts Wood, Chislehurst, Sidcup and beyond?

How can it not acknowledge that increasing operating time by 14.5 hours a week and attracting new jet aircraft operators will definitely increase noise to all these people?

How can the airport not acknowledge that reducing light aircraft movements around the airport, in favour of increasing jet aircraft movements down a long flight path has a disproportionate noise impact for a much bigger geographic area of south east London?

Why has the airport not recognised the existence of one of the biggest general hospitals in south England directly under the flight path and 1.5 miles from the runway?

Let's turn to jobs. 2,300 new

jobs says the airport. Even if that became a reality why does the airport not acknowledge that Biggin Hill has one of the lowest existing unemployment levels in the south east? Rightmove informs me that there are currently 70 houses and flats for sale in Biggin Hill, so where would the 2,300 live if they arrived?

Journey from elsewhere? An extra 4,000 daily journeys on Biggin Hill's one A-road, and country lanes?

Adding to the current jams in the rush hour? Great. Someone else's problem.

Time to take some action. If anyone has any doubts at all that the airport's proposals for extended hours can impact on their lives, their environment, their future or their house value tell the landlord – Stephen Carr, Bromley Council's leader at the Civic Centre, BR1 3UH.

Every individual view is important. The council's consultation on the airport proposals concludes on March 13.

Biggin Hill Airport has not moved. It is still in the wrong place with a flight path affecting far too many people.

**Hugh Bunce**  
Petts Wood

climate would probably result in cuts even if the library service remained under the KCC.

But the registration service definitely should not be allowed to follow that route.

**John Humphrey,**  
Sevenoaks

## Why we didn't back hub plans

AS PEOPLE who are passionate about Strood, we wanted to be clear why we didn't support the creation

of the new community hub.

Tesco had planned to create a new, purpose-built community facility at no cost to taxpayers.

As is well documented, their proposals for Strood have been scrapped.

The public were not consulted on the future for their library facility and this approach for Strood is different to Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham who have had their existing library converted to a community hub.

The money for this project was taken from the fund for council housing, again we feel the wrong

priority whilst Medway has 20,000 on the housing waiting list. A future Labour council would work with the residents of Strood rather than just doing things to the community without consultation.

**Cllrs Stephen Hubbard, Linda Robson, Gareth Batts**  
Strood North Labour Team  
**Cllrs Isaac Igwe, Robert Heathfield, Harinder Singh**  
Strood South Labour Team

## Driving powers are just not fair

YOUR 'Letter of the Week' from Lib Dem MEP, Catherine Bearder, crowing about recent legislation implantation that allows foreign drivers to be hounded across Europe and be punished for minor traffic infringements committed in this country, may be a populist view.

But for the more intelligent, with less interest in childish tit-for-tat revenge, they know that when we are driving abroad, we are then the 'foreigners' and liable for 'alleged' offences.

Even through our justice system and European wide, the Human Rights Act says we all have a right to a "fair and public hearing" by a "independent and impartial tribunal", this does not happen in this country, because for 99 per cent of the population, defending motoring offences is way beyond their financial resources.

Any form of justice is for the very well off, so no justice at all in fact.

Hence when some foreign police force sends a demand for money for some alleged motoring offence, what chance have you got of defending yourself, hundreds or thousands of miles from home, in a foreign court, an alien justice system and in a language you do to understand?

How easy for local police, mayors, private companies etc to just hand out prosecutions to any foreign registered vehicle, safe in the knowledge that there is virtual immunity from any cross examination of evidence, while raking in fine monies for themselves?

A true licence to print money and the bonus of not offending any local voters.

A good example of this type of scam is the Dartford Crossing. Only as you approach the crossing, are there a few signs in English to state this small part of the otherwise free British motorway system is tolled, with no explanation in any foreign language, saying how to pay.

Now all those foreign drivers, through no fault of their own, who have unintentionally been caught, are going to be denied any real justice and be chased across Europe for payment of heavy fines.

The Highways Agency and its private contractor knew this would be the result and are now 'cashing-in' on legislation that allows them to extort money in this way.

**Terry Hudson,**  
Whitstable





## Reculver Towers by Molly Hollman

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**PICTURESQUE:** Whitstable is famous for its beachside properties - but prices across the town have swelled in recent months

## Why the smart money is now moving to the east

Estate agents are hoping the spring sunshine brings with it a host of new sellers to help feed a market which has long shown it is back on the road to recovery

WHITSTABLE has long been one of the county's property hotspots, with some agents comparing its attraction to buyers with the most in-demand west Kent areas such as Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.

With house prices growing once more after years of decline, the seaside town has seen record growth of around 16.5 per cent - that's the equivalent of adding an additional £40,000 on to the value of the average home there.

What's more, there appears to be little sign of that slowing - fuelled in part, at least, by the recent reductions in stamp duty which has lifted a major barrier for many to taking the plunge and putting their home on the market.

The decision by the chancellor means the level of stamp duty has eased considerably for any property costing under £1 million.

The changes make stamp duty more like income tax.

For example, before the changes,

the duty on a house costing £250,000 or under would be one per cent.

Anything more expensive than that (even if only by £1) would be liable for a three per cent charge.

Since December 3 of last year, the tax would only be applied to the amount that falls within each band. So there's with no tax on the first £125,000, two per cent up to £250,000 and five per cent up to £925,000.

The top tier is 12 per cent on properties with a purchase price of above £1.5 million.

While it can still add a considerable, and often over-looked, sum to the whole house-selling process, the reduction does make a big difference, with estate agents reporting more activity.

Certainly its full impact is most likely to be felt over the coming weeks and months.

While there remains few homes on the market currently - a

situation which helps swell house prices - there is normally a flood of properties coming to market during the spring and early summer after new year vows to move home are followed by months of decorating and financial arrangements before taking the plunge.

All of which will further help boost the attractive nature of the likes of Whitstable which always benefits, as it does all seaside towns, with a spot of bright warm sunshine.

Better transport links introduced through high speed rail, as well as proximity to grammar schools in Canterbury and Faversham have also contributed to the number of people wanting to live in the area.

On top of this, the town's picturesque streets and coastline have attracted a different type of buyer. This is, of course, those looking for a holiday property, and retreat away from the grime and

pressure of city living.

Many of these buyers will come from London - and their eagerness to buy plus their generous budgets has accounted for a rise in prices.

Builder Wedgewood Homes has seen the knock-on impact after putting its Scape development, in Windmill Road, on the market for off-plan sales.

Despite lying just outside the town centre, demand has been high.

Mathew Carpenter of Wedgewood Homes said: "We are, unsurprisingly, experiencing a great deal of interest in the homes.

"With the buoyant property climate and the recent reductions in stamp duty, we only have two homes remaining."

**To check out the latest properties from across Kent, see [www.onthemove.com](http://www.onthemove.com) a new property portal backed by more than 4,000 estate and letting agent offices.**

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**FABIA:** Skoda's third generation of its successful supermini, launched in January, is sleeker and boasts more interior practicality than its loftier predecessor

## The best Fabia so far

Skoda's workhorse supermini keeps its practicality, yet goes upmarket with smart and slick third generation hatchback and estate models, writes **Steve Loader...**

**C**IRCUMSTANCES prevented an early drive of the latest Skoda Fabia – but it was worth the wait. Skoda has transformed its line-up with new or updated models plus a new front end, most obvious with this third generation Fabia supermini, launched in January.

It's sleeker and wears the new flashier corporate grille well, yet interior practicality matches its loftier predecessor.

Again offered as a five-door hatchback or load-lugging estate – the latter arriving in showrooms now – it claims class-leading practicality with more cabin space. The hatchback has a best-in-class boot: 330 litres with seats up and 1,150 litres seats down, compared with 300 and 1,180 previously.

The car is bigger yet lighter this time, with a good direct feel to the steering, and yet the taut chassis set-up does not come at the expense of ride quality.

Skoda says crash safety has been enhanced too – it was off the pace – while gadget connectivity levels are higher.

Running costs are also up to 17 per cent lower, with insurance groups slashed too, though prices are a little steeper this time (from £10,600); with Skoda regularly topping customer satisfaction polls, the Czech brand no longer has to sell on value alone.

Engine choice matters though: the current powertrain line-up opens with two three-cylinder 1.0-litre petrol options (59 and 74bhp) from Skoda's Citigo, but while they move that



city car along nicely, the figures don't make a strong case for the bigger Fabia.

Never a fan of diesel units in superminis, due to higher upfront costs and the extra engine weight impairing handling, I would also ignore the rather noisy three-pot

1.4-litre diesels (89 and 104bhp) unless you expect to notch up a galactic mileage.

Which leaves our preferred choice: two lively yet refined turbocharged four-cylinder 1.2-litre petrol versions, offering 89bhp or 109bhp.

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Official fuel consumption for the Fabia range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 46.3 (6.1) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2) to 91.1 (3.1); Combined 58.8 (4.8) to 83.1 (3.4). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the Fabia range are 110 to 88 g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.



# Sportage as fresh as day it was designed

Kia's rakish SUV/crossover still catches the eye after making UK consumers think again about the upwardly mobile Korean brand, writes **Steve Loader**

**K**IA will hate me saying so, but the Sportage is old by the standards of this ambitious Korean brand. Launched in 2010, the Grim Reaper beckons for a car produced by a company that tends to replace models on a five-year cycle. But should would-be buyers worry? Not a bit, because the current Sportage is possibly Kia's greatest design and best seller to date and, when riding on big wheels, looks to have leapt straight from the drawing board first impressions of Kia design guru Peter Schreyer and his team; such early images rarely make it into the metal without being toned down. And the result here was electric: a complete re-evaluation of the Kia brand by consumers. I know one couple, happy in their loyalty to premium brands, who were wowed enough to opt for the new Sportage and never looked back. Previous Sportages had been worthy but unremarkable 4x4 wannabes with respectable off-road ability; the current car was recognition that consumers really wanted something far more stylish that could sit on an urban drive if need be, yet be economical too while also



inheriting Kia's industry-leading seven-year/100,000-mile warranty. Though it was hard to fault, the Sportage also had a revamp last year that largely left its arresting looks unchanged, but has raised the specification values – not that the car needed it particularly – and also

boosted cabin refinement, though the 2.0-litre diesel version we tested can still be raucous under pressure even if its pulling power is impressive. Of course, most sales will be for front-wheel drive versions and £17,500 gets you into one of these, but it's the 1.6-litre petrol version so



you have to weigh up whether you want to spend an additional £1,600 for its equivalent 1.7-litre diesel, which sacrifices a little performance (0-62mph in 12.5 seconds versus the petrol's 11.5) for better fuel consumption (54.3mpg on the combined cycle versus 41.5 respectively).

<b>Kia Sportage 2.0 CRDI KX4 Auto AWD</b>	
Price:	from £29,505
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Nissan Qashqai

If you don't expect to cover the miles, the petrol wins, particularly in the current fuel pricing climate. The Sportage cabin doesn't seek to match the style of the exterior; with robust but unremarkable plastics and materials, this is more about durability, comfort and practicality, and there's also plenty of stowage and neat control arrangement. I would mark it higher if the rear seats folded absolutely flat to create a level load floor, but the 564-litre boot/1,353-litre seats down load area trumps its rivals. It also seats three across the back with good elbow, leg and headroom. On the road, the Sportage makes light of its big, tall body and feels nimble and well-sorted enough to be pushed hard with just a bit of wallow on bends.



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Fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Kia Sportage are: Urban 31.0 (9.1) – 47.1 (6.0), Extra-Urban 46.3 (6.1) – 58.9 (4.8) and Combined 39.2 (7.2) – 54.3 (5.2). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are between 189–135/km. MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown: Kia Sportage '2' 1.6 GDi 133bhp 6-speed manual @ £20,310 including metallic paint. Specification is subject to change without notice. Price, Reevo score and number of reviews correct at time of going to press. 7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty, for terms and exclusions visit [www.kia.co.uk](#). Offer not available with any other offer. Retail sales only. Subject to availability on vehicles registered between 07/01/15 and 31/03/15. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. 18's or over. Guarantee/indemnity may be required. 10% minimum deposit. Further charges may be made subject to the condition or mileage of the vehicle. Excess mileage charge 14.9p per mile. **You will not own the vehicle until all payments are made. We are a credit broker (not a lender), we can introduce you to a limited number of carefully selected finance providers and may receive a commission from them for the introduction.** 25, 31 and 37 month terms. At the end of the agreement there are 3 options: (i) Renew: Part exchange the vehicle. (ii) Retain: Pay the Optional Final Payment to own the vehicle or (iii) Return the vehicle. Kia Motors Finance RHI 15R.



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Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for New Generation i20 range: Urban 30.7 (9.2) - 80.7 (3.5), Extra Urban 53.3 (5.3) - 94.2 (3.0), Combined 42.2 (6.7) - 88.3 (3.2), CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 155-84g/km. Fuel consumption: figures shown are based on official EU test figures. These are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results. YOU WILL NOT OWN THE VEHICLE UNTIL ALL PAYMENTS ARE MADE. WE ARE A CREDIT BROKER (NOT A LENDER). WE CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF CAREFULLY SELECTED FINANCE PROVIDERS. WE MAY RECEIVE A COMMISSION FROM THEM FOR THE INTRODUCTION. 5.9% APR Representative available on Personal Contract Purchase over 25, 31 and 37 month term or Conditional Sale over 12, 24 or 36 month term. Ts & Cs apply. Finance subject to status. Available between 22nd January and 31st March 2015, inclusive. Applicants must be 18 or over, Guarantee / Indemnity may be required, Hyundai Motor Finance RH1 1SR. Model shown: New Generation i20 Premium SE at £14,725 with metallic paint at £495 extra.



By Steve Loader  
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



**A WIDE CHOICE:**  
Motability car buyers can shop around as much as any able-bodied person, from looking at the practicality of a smart SUV like the Skoda Yeti, to checking out a premium hatchback like the BMW 1 Series

## Liberation through Motability

**D**ISABLED people and their families have had their lives revolutionised by the Government-backed operation Motability scheme. This enables them to get on the road for much less than it would cost to buy or lease a new or nearly new car privately, and helps them with potentially costly adaptations for controls or wheelchair access. On top of that, the scheme's regular payments can take care of everyday running

costs, from insurance, maintenance and repairs, to breakdown help – a huge reassurance when the cost of motoring is soaring. What is more, Motability does not insist that the disabled person is the driver; the car is made available for the benefit of that person, which means that up to two other named drivers can be on the car's insurance cover instead of the disabled person. ■ For more about this liberating scheme for disabled people, see inside this special supplement.



### DESIGNED FOR MOTABILITY



RENAULT CLIO DYNAMIQUE  
MEDIANAV dCi 90 EDC Auto

Renault Bass Reflex sound system  
Efficient ENERGY engines with low CO<sub>2</sub>

**Nil Advance Payment\***



RENAULT CAPTUR DYNAMIQUE  
MEDIANAV ENERGY Tce 90 S&S

Washable, removable seat covers  
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**Nil Advance Payment\***



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**£495 Advance Payment\***



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ASHFORD TN23 1EW  
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**BOOK A TEST-DRIVE**



The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the cars shown are: urban 47 (6)–76.4 (3.7); extra-urban 64.02 (4.4)–67.26 (4.2); combined 56.49 (5)–83.1 (3.4). The official CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are 115–90g/km. EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008 test environment figures. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> may vary with driving styles, road conditions and other factors.

\*Advance payment offers are only valid for Motability applications to 31 March 2015 and are correct at time of going to press. \*\*Excludes i.d. paint for Renault Clio and Renault Scenic †£200 offer only valid at Motorline Renault locations in Ashford, Canterbury & Maidstone. Offer only valid for Motability applications to 31 March 2015 and are correct at time of going to press. £200 to be provided to applicant on receipt of vehicle. Motability is a trademark of Motability. Registered charity number 299745.



# How Motability crushed the Invacar

**T**RANSPORT aid for the disabled used to be limited strictly to those who could drive themselves.

And this was usually in the form of a notoriously unstable three-wheeler Invacar, with a lot of in-built stigma but room for the driver only – not much use for families – and a tendency to tip over on corners or in high winds.

That changed with the launch of the Government-backed Motability charity in 1978, which calculated an allowance that disabled people could use towards a vehicle of their choice.

The blue Invacar was made obsolete at a stroke – finally outlawed from UK roads in 2003 – and opened up transport to disabled people who couldn't drive themselves.

Since then, more than three

million cars, scooters and powered wheelchairs have been sourced through Motability, allowing disabled people to go shopping, do voluntary work, visit friends, go to the doctor, do sport, give a family member a lift, or go on holiday – all things the motoring majority takes for granted.

Some users have even been able to take up further education or pursue better jobs and careers, having been liberated by their new mobility.

The scheme was modified recently though, to speed up procedures and prevent misuse creeping into the system.

The key changes were:

- Streamlining the list of cars available
- Nominated drivers must live at, or within five miles, of the applicant's address, though special circumstances will be considered
- Drivers under 25 are restricted



**SUCH VARIETY:** Invacar users would have been amazed that they could have cars like the capacious yet compact Fiat 500L, upmarket Volvo V60 or the convenience of the Skoda Citigo runabout

ed to cars with an insurance group of 16 or lower and with a power output of 115bhp or less

- Drivers under 21 are only permitted to drive Motability vehicles in cases where they live with the disabled customer.



# MINI AND MOTABILITY. THE PERFECT MATCH.



## THE MINI 3-DOOR HATCH.

**FROM £0**

**\*ADVANCE PAYMENT.**

### MINI HATCH BEST BITS:

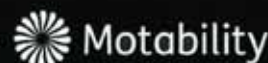
- Room for four people plus luggage
- 50:50 split folding rear seats
- Combined fuel economy: 62.8 mpg
- Air conditioning
- DAB digital radio/Aux-In connection



**Contact your local Broad Oak MINI Centre today and find out more about Motability and MINI.**

**Broad Oak Ashford**  
The Boulevard, Orbital Business Park, TN24 OGA  
01233 500555  
[www.broadoakashfordmini.co.uk](http://www.broadoakashfordmini.co.uk)

**Broad Oak Canterbury**  
Broad Oak Road, Canterbury, CT2 7PX  
01227 828899  
[www.broadoakcanterburymini.co.uk](http://www.broadoakcanterburymini.co.uk)



**Official Fuel Economy Figures for the Mini 3-door Hatch Range:** Urban 37.2-72.4 mpg (7.6-9.1 l/100km), Extra Urban 46.5-117.0 mpg (5.7-3.4 l/100km), Combined 49.8-83.1 mpg (5.7-3.4 l/100km). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 133-86 g/km. Figures may vary depending on driving style and conditions.

**Warranty:** A three-year or 50,000-mile (whichever is available from 01 April 2015) warranty under the Mobility Contract New Scheme. Model featured as a MINI Cooper 3-door Hatch with 1.6-litre engine and automatic gearbox.

**Growth of optional extra equipment under the Mobility Contract New Scheme:** At prices correct at time of going to press, the Mobility Contract New Scheme is administered by Metability Operations Limited. The facilities offered are for the new Hatch range. The facilities offered are for the new Hatch range. The facilities offered are for the new Hatch range.

**Registered Company No. 13728761, Citi Cars House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 1HE. To qualify you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance, the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the War Pensions, Black Veterans' Pension or the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).**



# Motability: The Fact

**U**P to two nominated drivers can drive a Motability vehicle, but the disabled person qualifying for the scheme does not have to be one of them.

The drivers may be friends or relatives, and parents or carers can apply on behalf of a child aged three years or older. The car only has to be used for the benefit of the disabled person, such as a shopping trip or collecting a prescription – they don't even have to be in the car.

A third insured driver can be added for a small payment.

If you receive the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, you can apply for a Motability lease by

exchanging part or all of that allowance.

Motability is a worry-free package that includes:

- A choice of around 2,000 car models
- Insurance, servicing and maintenance
- RAC breakdown assistance
- Road tax
- Tyre and windscreen replacement
- 60,000 mileage allowance over 3 years.

Car dimensions vary: seat height, door

opening angle and storage space for wheel-chairs and equipment can all affect whether the car works for you and your particular disability or not, but your local dealer can take you through a questionnaire designed to ensure the car and Motability is right for you.

Many special adaptations are available free to help with speed and steering, signalling and safety, stowage, and seating and access. The Motability package continues to the end of your three-year lease, with a seamless transfer to your new car.

Around 600,000 customers choose Motability and 97 per cent say they would recommend the scheme to their friends.



## MOTABILITY MOBILITY STARS:

the Peugeot 2008 and Renault Captur are stylish yet spacious crossovers, but the Toyota Verso MPV offers seven seats or a capacious load area



## AURIS ICON

**NIL**

Advance payment

Toyota Touch™  
multimedia  
system

Rear-view  
parking camera

Bluetooth®  
connectivity

16" alloy  
wheels

## TOYOTA MOTABILITY. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS DRIVE.

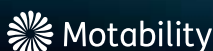
To arrange a test drive contact us at:

**Motorline Ashford**  
The Crescent, Ashford  
Tel: 0844 822 7122

**Motorline Canterbury**  
Broad Oak Road, Canterbury  
Tel: 0844 822 7130

**Motorline Tunbridge Wells**  
Dowding Way, Tunbridge Wells  
Tel: 0844 822 7169

[motorline.toyota.co.uk](http://motorline.toyota.co.uk)



**TOYOTA**

ALWAYS A  
**BETTER WAY**



**AYGO X-PRESSION**  
NIL ADVANCE PAYMENT



**YARIS ICON**  
NIL ADVANCE PAYMENT



**AURIS TOURING SPORTS**  
FROM £199 ADVANCE PAYMENT



**7 SEAT VERSO**  
FROM £495 ADVANCE PAYMENT

Models shown in order are Auris Icon 1.33 Manual at NIL Advance Payment, Aygo x-expression 5 door 1.0 VVT-i Manual at NIL Advance Payment, Yaris Icon 5 door 1.3 VVT-i at NIL Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 1.33 at £645 Advance Payment, Verso Icon 1.6 D-4D Manual at £995 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st January and 31st March 2015. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Auris Icon 1.33 Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 40.4 (7.0), Extra Urban 60.1 (4.7), Combined 51.4 (5.5). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 128g/km. Aygo x-expression 3 door 1.0 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 95g/km. Yaris Icon 1.3 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 44.1 (5.2), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 57.7 (4.9). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 114g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 1.33 Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 39.8 (7.1), Extra Urban 58.9 (4.8), Combined 50.4 (5.6). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 130g/km. Verso Icon 1.6 D-4D 6-speed Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 51.4 (5.5), Extra Urban 72.3 (3.9), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 119g/km. The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU – regulated test results. These are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

# Want to go green with Motability?

**E** On through savings on fuel and tax, as much as saving the planet.

And Motability caters for those of its customers who want to 'go eco' for either reason by flagging up the best models for this, using a green leaf symbol on its website Car Search.

Of course, most low emission cars (road tax bands A and B) have smaller engines and bodies and could be unsuitable for disabled users or their families, who may require more space for wheelchair storage or extra passengers.

Another key issue is whether to opt for diesel or petrol.

The popular wisdom has been that diesel cars are more economical, but this is not so clear cut now when the diesels cost more upfront and the fuel itself is dearer at the pumps.

If most of your driving is long distance or on motorways, then Motability recommends diesel is best for fuel efficiency and lower CO2 emissions, but if you mostly drive in town or locally, petrol is best and less polluting; diesels give off harmful pollutants, though these should be neutralised by a particulate filter on the exhaust if the car is properly maintained.

Modern turbocharged petrol engines have also become more efficient and tend to be nicer to drive than diesel equivalents, particularly in smaller models.

Hybrids – harnessing a petrol or diesel engine in tandem with an electric motor and batteries – are another option, but tend to be more expensive, while electric cars simply don't have the range between charges at present to be viable for anything other than short distance



**SAVE EMISSIONS AND CASH:** with hybrid versions of models like the Honda Jazz or Toyota Auris Touring Sports (estate), or extra frugal diesels available in line-ups like Volvo's V40 hatchback



## Great Motability offers from Peugeot

**3008 ACTIVE 1.6 HDi 115 5 door**

**£299 ADVANCE PAYMENT\***

- 17" alloy wheels • Rear parking aid
- Automatic headlights and wipers
- Cruise control with speed limiter



**2008 ACCESS+ 1.4 HDi 70**

**NIL ADVANCE PAYMENT\***

- Radio CD player • Air conditioning
- Electric front windows • Cruise control



### PEUGEOT 3008 ACTIVE / 2008 ACCESS+

The Peugeot 2008 Access+ is now available through Motability with nil advance payment\*.

Or choose the Peugeot 3008 Active, for an advance payment of just £299\*. You'll even get insurance, breakdown cover, servicing and maintenance included for 3 years. Contact us today to find out more.



PEUGEOT

MOTION & EMOTION

### MOTORLINE CANTERBURY

Broad Oak Road, CANTERBURY, CT2 7PX

01227 451791 [www.motorline-canterbury.co.uk](http://www.motorline-canterbury.co.uk)

Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km) for the 3008 Range are: Urban 30.7–62.7 (9.2–4.5), Extra Urban 53.2–70.6 (5.3–4.0), Combined 42.1–67.3 (6.7–4.2) and CO<sub>2</sub> 155–110 (g/km). 2008 range are: Urban 32.1–68.9 (8.8–4.1), Extra Urban 54.3–78.5 (5.2–3.6), Combined 43.5–74.3 (6.5–3.8) and CO<sub>2</sub> 150–98 (g/km).

MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. \*Models shown in order are 3008 Active 1.6 HDi 115 5 Door with £299 advance payment and 2008 Access+ 1.4 HDi 70 with nil advance payment. Subject to availability and on selected models only. Offers available on cars ordered between 1st January 2015 and 31st March 2015. Information and offers correct at time of going to press. For full terms and conditions please contact the Peugeot Motability line on 0845 945 5466. Calls may be recorded for training purposes.

Motability  
offers you the  
ability to enjoy  
worry-free  
motoring

A new  
car  
every **3** years

Breakdown  
cover and  
insurance  
included

To find out how  
Motability can help  
you, talk to our  
specialist today.



**Motability**  
The leading car scheme for disabled people



**BMW EfficientDynamics**  
Less emissions. More driving pleasure.

The BMW  
Motability Car  
Scheme



The Ultimate  
Driving Machine



# MOTORING MADE EASIER. THE BMW MOTABILITY CAR SCHEME.



- The practical and incredibly spacious, new BMW 2 Series Active Tourer is now added to the Motability Scheme.
- Manual or automatic transmission and high standard specification includes metallic paint, with wide range of options available.
- A brand new BMW every three years, including tax, insurance, servicing and maintenance.
- EfficientDynamics technologies improve fuel economy, without compromising unique BMW driving dynamics.

## THE BMW MOTABILITY CAR SCHEME FROM £899 ADVANCE PAYMENT\*.

### Broad Oak Canterbury

Broad Oak Road, Canterbury  
Kent CT2 7PX 01227 828888  
[www.broadoakcanterburybmw.co.uk](http://www.broadoakcanterburybmw.co.uk)

### Broad Oak Ashford

The Boulevard, Orbital Business Park  
Ashford, Kent TN24 OGA 01233 500555  
[www.broadoakashfordbmw.co.uk](http://www.broadoakashfordbmw.co.uk)



Official fuel economy figures for the BMW range available on the Motability Car Scheme: Urban 36.7-64.2mpg (7.7-4.4l/100km). Extra Urban 58.9-83.1mpg (4.8-3.4l/100km) Combined 47.9-74.3mpg (5.9-3.8l/100km). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 124-99g/km.

Figures may vary depending on driving style and conditions.

\*The BMW range available on the Motability Contract Hire Car Scheme starts from £899 Advance Payment for the BMW 116d SE 3 and 5-door Sports Hatch. Prices are correct at time of going to print for orders placed and accepted between 01 January and 31 March 2015. All models on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme include optional metallic paint at no extra cost. Models featured may include options at an additional cost. The facilities offered are for the hire (bailment) of goods. The Motability Contract Hire Scheme is administered by Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. To qualify you must be in receipt of either the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS) or the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP), which will be taken in lieu of the four weekly rental. Terms and conditions apply and are available on request. BMW EfficientDynamics reduces emissions without compromising performance developments and is standard across the model range.



# 'Drive' your car onsite with Motability

**D**ISABLED car buyers can't easily trek around many different dealers to find their ideal car so it's great that Motability's website ([www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)) can help draw up a short list before you 'check out the metal'.

Its search function allows a fast scan through 2,000 or so eligible vehicles, taking account of buying parameters and the specialist needs of Motability users.

Search by car details takes a consumer-style approach and includes:

- What kind of mobility allowance the user has
- What level of advance payment the user intends to pay, if anything
- Preferred car type, make, model and number of doors
- Whether the user wants a manual, semi-automatic or automatic gearbox
- Whether the driver is under-25

But there are two other search programmes: Search by Accessibility Needs, taking account of car measurements; and Search for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV).

There is also excellent advice on what type of car to look for, in language more relevant to disabled users, such as how hatchbacks have a lift-up rear door or 'hatch', which could make it harder for a wheelchair user to open/close or access items, or problematic when opening in the garage.

## EASY CHOICE:

Motability.co.uk's search function makes it easier to work out which of these is best for you: an MPV like BMW's new 2 Series Active Tourer or Renault's funky Scenic XMOD, or a practical supermini like the Toyota Yaris



## MEET THE EXTENDED FAMILY

### FIAT 500L MPW

- 7 seats option\*
- Auto Climate Control
- 632 litre boot\*

### FIAT 500L

- Available with:
- 1.3 MultiJet diesel engine
  - Dualogic (Auto) transmission
  - Up to 70.6 mpg combined

### FIAT 500L TREKKING

- Traction +
- City Brake Control
- Mud & Snow tyres

## THE FIAT 500L RANGE FROM NIL ADVANCE PAYMENT\*



For further information or for a complete list of Fiat cars offered on the Motability Scheme, please call Northgate Canterbury on 01227 828200.



**NORTHGATE CANTEBURY, 1 WESTMINSTER ROAD, CANTERBURY, KENT CT1 1YY.**  
**TEL: 01227 828200 WWW.NORTHGATE-GROUP.CO.UK**

Fuel consumption figures for the Fiat 500L range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 30.4 (9.3) – 62.8 (4.5); Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7) – 76.3 (3.7); Combined 40.4 (7.0) – 70.6 (4.0). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 163 – 105 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Vehicles shown are Fiat 500L Pop Star 1.3 MultiJet Dualogic 85hp with NIL Advance Payment, plus Fiat 500L Trekking 1.3 MultiJet 85hp with Advance Payment of only £95 and Fiat 500L MPW Lounge 1.3 MultiJet 85hp with Advance Payment of only £195, both featured with optional Bicolour paint at additional cost. \*The Fiat 500L MPW boot space is based on 5 seat version with rear seats pulled forward. \*Based on 5+2 seat version. 5 standard seats and two extra seats for persons up to 1.65m. Advance Payments are correct at time of going to press and subject to orders being placed between 1st January – 31st March 2015. Not available in conjunction with any other offer. Terms & Conditions apply. Offer may be varied and withdrawn at any time.



# Top tips on making your Motability choice

## ■ Small cars

TEND to have lower advance payments, running costs and CO2 emissions than larger vehicles. 2-3-door cars generally have wider doors with larger opening angles, which makes access easier, but closing the door and fitting in narrow parking spaces may be harder. 4/5-door cars benefit from superior back seat access – useful if you often have more than one passenger.

## ■ Medium cars

Are often sold as hatchbacks and will have a slightly bigger boot than a standard small car.

The same doors argument applies as for small cars.

## ■ Family cars

Family cars are large 4-door saloons or 5-door hatchbacks and are considerably larger than medium sized cars.

Hatchbacks usually have more boot capacity.

## ■ Crossovers

As the name implies, these versatile models merge several sectors: family hatchbacks and (see later) MPVs and SUVs.

## ■ Estate cars

Usually longer than a standard saloon or hatchback, with useful



**SPACE RACE:** the Honda CR-V, Skoda Roomster and Peugeot 5008 all deliver lots of cabin capacity within a different body style



space for mobility aids in the boot, but this can add to the car's bulk so make sure you check it out with a

test drive before committing.

Ranging from small to large, MPVs can seat up to nine people. The seats are higher, with more headroom,

## ■ Multi-purpose vehicles (MPV)

legroom and width. Some have large sliding side doors, which improve access for those with disabilities.

## ■ 4x4 and Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV)

The term '4x4' is usually used to describe vehicles designed for off-road use, which generally have higher ground clearance.

Until recently, all 4x4s had 4-wheel drive, but many people now buy for the SUV styling and opt for front-wheel drive only to save fuel.

## ■ Coupes, roadsters and cabriolets

Coupes are small and sporty-looking, seating either two or four people, but may be compromised for disabled users due to their two-door format, low and cramped seating and smaller boots.

## ■ Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)

WAVs are cars converted to carry passengers travelling in their wheelchair or those who wish to drive from a wheelchair. WAVs may be best if you have trouble getting in and out of the car from your wheelchair and would prefer to remain in it when travelling as a passenger. WAVs come in different sizes and have many standard features. The Motability website has a specific WAV Search.

**Lipscomb** Cars Ltd  
[www.lipscomb.co.uk](http://www.lipscomb.co.uk)

**Motability**  
The leading car scheme for disabled people



**FIAT 500L**  
1.3 M-JET 85 POP STAR DUALOGIC

**£NIL** ADVANCE PAYMENT



**JEEP RENEGADE**  
1.4 MULTIAIR LONGITUDE

**£745** ADVANCE PAYMENT

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ADVANCE  
PAYMENT AT  
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**ALL CARS INCLUDE METALLIC  
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TEST DRIVE TODAY!**



**ALFA ROMEO GIULIETTA**  
PROGRESSION 1.4 TB 120

**£695** ADVANCE PAYMENT



**VOLVO V40**  
CROSSCOUNTRY D2 SE 5 DOOR

**£299** ADVANCE PAYMENT



Lipscomb Cars Ltd 01622 238389  
Performance House, Forstal Road,  
Aylesford, Maidstone, Kent ME20 7XA



Lipscomb Volvo 01227 208516  
Central House, Ashford Road, Chartham,  
Canterbury, Kent CT4 7HH



Lipscomb Fiat 01233 223079  
Bridge House, Chart Road,  
Ashford, Kent TN23 3HZ

# You must take the test drive...

**B**OOK early – it's a New Registration month at the moment and dealers are busy, so map out a campaign to drive your chosen candidates soon after one another to allow more accurate comparisons.

Allow time – you need enough to drive the car in all situations: town traffic, on the motorway – or some high speed cruising at least – and on

less well-maintained rural roads. An hour should be sufficient, as long as you avoid getting stuck in a rush hour jam.

What are you looking for? Seat and ride comfort, how refined it is in terms of engine, wind, tyre and mechanical noise. And especially...

Do you like the controls? Many car-makers are going their own way in search of the best ergonomics or human interaction with the controls,

but they don't suit everyone. One bone of contention is the modern electronic handbrake and the many different installations by different brands.

Is it the right spec? Try to get a test car as close to the one you are interested in, even if you have to wait a few days for the dealer to arrange it or have to go to another dealership. Chances are the

dealer will have a higher spec model than the one you want, it's then easier to be seduced by the car.

Make it a family outing – it can be a painful process of 'are we there yet?' proportions, but try to get as many of the would-be car users involved in the test drive – drivers and non-driv-

ers. The sort of issues here are: yes, it's great for those in the front but what about comfort and visibility in the rear? There are three seat belts, but is there really room for three across the back seat, especially if one place has to take a strap-in child seat or booster as well? Can I lift shopping in and out of the boot easily or indeed, is there much of a boot?



**TRY IT OUT:** whether it's the new MINI 5-DR, trendy Renault Clio or practical Fiat Qubo, it needs to be right for you



The Honda range,  
available from Nil Advance Payment

**HONDA**  
The Power of Dreams



CR-V from £999 Advance Payment.



Civic from Nil Advance Payment.



Civic Tourer from £499 Advance Payment.



Jazz from Nil Advance Payment.



**BARRETT'S HONDA**

Vauxhall Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YY

Call 01227 866266 or visit [www.barretts-honda.co.uk](http://www.barretts-honda.co.uk)

Fuel consumption figures for the Honda range in mpg (l/100km): Urban Cycle 23.2 – 70.6 (12.2 – 4.0), Extra Urban 40.4 – 85.6 (7.0 – 3.3), Combined 32.5 – 78.5 (8.7 – 3.6). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 201 – 94g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

**Models Shown:** Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC ES Plus Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic Tourer 1.8 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic and CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD in optional Passion Red Pearl. Terms and Conditions: Nil Advanced Payment offer on Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC ES Plus Manual and Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual, £499 Advanced Payment offer on Civic Tourer 1.8 i-VTEC S Manual, £999 Advanced Payment offer on CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD. All offers are correct at the time of going to print however Honda (UK) reserves the right to change this offer at any time. Models subject to availability. Written details available on request. The facilities offered are for the hire of goods. The scheme is available to recipients of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement. To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of a minimum of 12 months allowance. Valid for applications between 1 January 2015 to 31 March 2015 to Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at Cain Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1HL.

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Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the ŠKODA range: Urban 21.7 (13.0) to 74.3 (3.8), Extra Urban 40.4 (7.0) to 94.2 (3.0), Combined 30.4 (9.3) to 88.3 (3.2). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the ŠKODA range 217 to 85g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.



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Recruitment packs are available online at: [www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk](http://www.swaleacademiestrust.org.uk).

A covering letter of application should be included with your application form detailing how you meet the requirements of the job description and person specification. Please note CVs will not be considered unless accompanied by an application form.

Closing date: Tuesday 10 March 2015 (noon)  
Interview date: Thursday 12 March 2015

*Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*

*This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.*

Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461  
Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA

Trust Personnel Manager: Mrs S Walker [swalker@swaleacademiestrust.org.uk](mailto:swalker@swaleacademiestrust.org.uk)  
Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732  
Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS



**Abbey Court School**

**"We grow people"**

Abbey Court School provides a stimulating, challenging and safe learning environment where pupils and staff efforts, work and achievement are celebrated.

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Abbey Court is located on 2 sites: Rainham (Nursery and Primary) and Strood (Secondary and Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties. Working hours are 32.5 p/w (8.45am – 3.45pm), term time only.

Comprehensive training and induction will be provided.

Only those with childcare experience, or relevant childcare qualifications should apply.

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

For an application pack, please write to telephone (stating the role for which you are applying):  
Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road,  
Strood, Kent. ME2 3SP (01634 338236)

Please note CV's will **NOT** be accepted.

Closing date: 20.3.15

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[www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk](http://www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk)

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Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEOM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

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Salary: Dependant on experience**

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- Relevant experience working in a theatre Department
- Knowledge of research and evidence-based practice
- Ability to assess, plan and evaluate patient care

**Theatre Scrub Practitioners  
Full Time. Hours: 37.5 per week  
Salary: Dependant on experience**

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- Relevant experience working in a Theatre Department
- Knowledge of research and evidence-based practice
- Ability to assess, plan and evaluate patient care

**Closing date: 31/03/2015**

To discuss these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:  
**Vicky Smith, Quality Assurance Lead Nurse on 07477 823969**

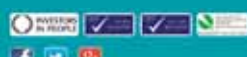
We regret that CVs are not accepted for any of our roles, for an application pack please visit: [www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/blog/vanguard](http://www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/blog/vanguard)

**Alternatively, please contact Justine Whittle, HR Assistant,  
Telephone 01304 245943  
E-Mail: [recruitment@spencerhospitals.com](mailto:recruitment@spencerhospitals.com)**

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**Top 10 Tips  
for writing a CV**

Before you send off your CV or upload it to a job board you need to be 100% confident you are putting your best foot forward.

- 1 Check and double check grammar and spelling ☒
- 2 Exaggeration - Don't be tempted to invent qualifications or embellish the extent of your work experience. ☒
- 3 Keep it concise and clear - Less is more. Aim for two pages, maximum. ☒
- 4 No repetition - Always check that you haven't used the same words for describing different skills, work experience, or interests. ☒
- 5 Tailor Your CV - Don't be tempted to send the same CV to a large number of employers. Tailoring it will give you a better chance of success. ☒
- 6 Presentation - Use a commonly used font such as Times Roman or Arial ☒
- 7 Highlight achievements - Remember the purpose/goal of the CV is to get the interview - it needs to stand out and help you sell yourself. ☒
- 8 Back up with examples - Try to include examples of any skill or achievement. This will give an employer an idea of how you have used your skills. ☒
- 9 Use your friends and family - Get someone to proof read your CV. ☒
- 10 Keep it fresh - Update your CV whenever you've gained more experience. ☒



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**PLANNING**



**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING  
(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE)  
(ENGLAND) ORDER 2010**

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

**Y14/1302/SH** - Holly Cottage Swan Lane Sellindge Ashford Kent  
- Change of use and conversion of existing garage/workshop to a self contained dwelling, together with erection of associated single storey front/side extension.

**Y15/0160/SH** - Mill House The Row Elham Canterbury Kent - Erection of a single storey rear extension.

**Y15/0154/SH** - Mill House The Row Elham Canterbury Kent - Listed building consent for the erection of a single storey rear extension.

**Y15/0073/SH#** - West Lawn Lydd Road New Romney Kent TN28 8DH - Listed Building Consent for the demolition of two curtilage listed outbuildings.

**Y15/0184/SH** - 32 Sandgate Esplanade Sandgate Folkestone Kent CT20 3EA - Erection of rear balcony, with external staircase, at upper ground floor level to be accessed by bi-fold doors together with creation of parking area in rear garden and new vehicle access.

**Y15/0175/SH+** - Holiday Extras Ashford Road Newingreen Hythe Kent - Erection of 1415sqm extension to existing office building, together with extension to car park to provide 80 additional parking spaces and formation of new vehicular access to Stone Street.

**Y15/0107/SH\*** - 13 Clifton Crescent Folkestone Kent CT20 2EL - Change of use of hotel (C1) to mixed use hotel (C1) and a large house in multiple occupation (sui generis).

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to [planning@shepway.gov.uk](mailto:planning@shepway.gov.uk). Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

# - The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

+ - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

The applications marked (\*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning  
Shepway District Council





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## Women Seeking

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**ATTRACTIVE** lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTm professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569

**SOPHIA** young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399

**JAN** 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

**ADVENTUROUS** sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age, I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 413301

**ALISON** 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

**ANNE**, mid 40's, cheerful busy lady seeking affectionate real woman! Seeks gent, any age or looks for nights at mine. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 410291

**DEBORAH** 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

**DISCREET** lady, 42yrs wants to make you happy, come to me and let me do that for you. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 409901

**PAMELA**, married to boring man! Text only for fun phone frolics. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 409901

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**CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

Call 0207 720 7130 Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm or email us at support@jmediauk.co.uk

**LINDA** 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195

**JULIA**, seeks fifty shades of grey! You should be strong minded and seeking fun. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4627445

**TERESA** 39, petite, cuddly and bubbly seeks kind older male to travel, have fun, and take care of, pamper and flirt with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416081

**SUSIE** bubbly blonde looking for fun. Age/looks unimportant but must have a sense of adventure. Can travel and accommodate. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624145

**LUCY** stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416079

**PHILLIPPA** 22yrs just left boarding school, hoping to meet experienced working class man for real life fun. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624147

**PETITE** blonde, blue eyes, very feminine and sensual seeks younger male for friendship and discreet fun. Can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416777

**SLIM** brunette 36yrs hoping to meet older gent for friendship, fun, maybe more. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624146

**SARAH** 29yr old pretty slim single mum of one, interesting, lively, good fun, enjoys nights in/out, music, seeking similar easy going, genuine, honest man/idea to get to know. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415841

**PAMMY** 42yrs, recently divorced and fancies becoming a "cougar". Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624148

**ANGIE** attractive nurse 39yrs, new to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, WLTm fun, male for possible ltr. looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827

**LISA** attractive petite Filipino female, very lonely, wanting to find love, companionship and to be happy, looking for friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415549

**SUE** 55, 5ft 8ins, blonde hair, fashionable, smoker, GSOH, enjoys meals out, travel, animals, WLTm kind, shyish man for friendship maybe more. Thanet area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415735

**INTELLIGENT** funny guy without a huge ego required for damaged heart. Casey 39, size 10, curves in all the right places, pretty, kind, loving, genuine, romantic and available. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415509

**BLACK** lady 43, sincere, down to earth, fun loving, likes theatre, cinema, meals out, walks, seeking white gent with GSOH, sincere and down to earth. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415477

**JENNY** voluptuous blonde tanned well presented female, enjoys being and giving pampering, cooking, cosy nights, looking for some broadminded excitement. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415399

**JOYCE** 39, attractive GSOH, loves nights out, honest, loyal, fun to be with, looking for mature male for adult companionship, meals out and hopefully more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415561

**NICOLETTE** 32 petite professional attractive black female looking for similar hardworking white male who like me loves life and is serious about finding a LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415545

**PAT** blonde blue eyed curvy, cuddly female, attractive, likes swimming, gardening, holidays, my job/home, looking for happiness with quiet content grounded male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415533

**MANDY** 35, petite attractive slim female with very GSOH, likes to keep fit, meals in/out, WLTm genuine child friendly guy/dad for fun times together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415513

## Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras.

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**YOUNG** at heart 73yr old male, seeking friendship and companionship, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, gardening and sport. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416557

**WELL** built 6ft tall ex soldier would like to be given my orders by a special lady and to have fun times with. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4420728

**MALE** 70's, fit, looking for lady to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416663

**MATTHEW**, 43 widowed, business manager, solvent, reasonable looks but lonely. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624150

**JACK** 47, tall, good looking, average build, GSOH, seeks slim, broad minded female, any age for discreet no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416567

**MALE** blond hair, blue eyes, seeking female with GSOH, 45-60. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416445

**JACK** 47, tall, good looking, average build, GSOH, seeks slim, broadminded, submissive female, any age for discreet no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416435

**PETE** 49, slim, 5ft 7in s, smoker, creative, likes art, live bands, outdoors, seeks similar female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416421

**JOHN** 67, gentle, easy going, good natured, seeks affectionate, loving black female, any age for friendship and fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415913

**SIMON** 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, writing, loop holes, Thailand, Singapore, seeking pretty female, 35 plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416345

**ELDERLY** Redhill male, seeks slim lady to reignite ones thoughts of female company. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416221

**ACTIVE** honest, reliable, loyal, N/S male, 70, varied interests, seeks slim, positive, 60's lady for friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415931

**QUIET** easy going gent, likes nights in/out, seeks kind, caring white female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416055

**MATURE** businessman, seeking slim, independent young female for mutual pleasure. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416023

**ASIAN** male, 68, US educated, seeks black/European female of similar age, discreet, East London. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415997

**BRITISH** white professional male, seeking intelligent, independent Asian/black female, 30-42 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415961

**WHITE** Spanish male, 42, work full time, seeks African lady, 20-45 for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415941

**MALE** 46, wishes to meet female of similar age for fun, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415923

**JACKIE** very pretty leggy well-mannered/educated 28yr old female, loves nights in/out, sports, WLTm sincere male up to 35yrs for friendship, hopefully ltr. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415377

**DONNA** 36yrs un-modest but very attractive, nice eyes, good figure, GSOH, OHAC, great job, sick of never meeting Mr Right, looking for someone special. Genuine male please. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415187

**ALISON** 27yr old very bored broadminded female with plenty of free time on her hands looking for some adult fun times. Call me, I won't disappoint. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415177

**DEE** lonely divorced female, slim, bubbly, attractive redhead, loves cuddles, looking for a man who can restore my faith in love and make me laugh. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414961

**JACKIE** extremely sensual lady but for your eyes only! likes horses, keeping fit, gardening looking for genuine love interest and companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414721

**GRAHAM** tall, semi-retired, Piscean, likes sailing, seeks female, any nationality. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415463

**SIMON** 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, puzzles, loop holes, ambiguity, seeks pretty leggy female, 35 plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415447

**GRAHAM** tall, semi-retired, Piscean, likes sailing, seeks female, any nationality. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415463

**SIMON** 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, puzzles, loop holes, ambiguity, seeks pretty leggy female, 35 plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415447

**SIMON** 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, writing, puzzles, loopholes, ambiguity, WLTm very pretty, leggy female, 6ft plus, 40 plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415155

**PAUL** early 60's, fit, smart, GSOH, WLTm female for some casual times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415113

**ANDY** young 66, widower, honest, caring, affectionate, GSOH, looking for LTR with lady 60's, slim and likeminded. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415093

**JOHN** own business, blue eyes, dark hair, loving, caring, tactful, 5ft 10ins, own home, likes to wine and dine, come and meet me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414987

**LADY** companion wanted for older gent, good position in life, likes travel, property abroad etc. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414821

**MALE** seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703

**74 YR** old retired, widowed male, fit, young looking, seeking younger female for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415855

**LONELY** 75yr old male, OHAC, tall, medium build, genuine, loving, kind, seeking lovely kind lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415791

**MIKE** Canterbury mature male, seeks single mum/lady, 28-42, slim-medium build for loving, caring relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415275

**BUILDER** 45, tall, good looking, kind, considerate, easy going seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415315

**52YR** old male, seeks female for adult fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415261

**GRAHAM** tall, semi-retired, Piscean, likes sailing, seeks female, any nationality. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415463

**LATE** 60's male, fit, 5ft 10ins, GSOH, usual trappings, likes nice restaurants etc, slim, reliable, seeks nice lady for whatever comes. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414643

**GARETH** handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414221

**SINGLE** male, early 50's, seeking female for discreet meets, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414347

**SIMON** 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, puzzles, loop holes, ambiguity, seeks pretty leggy female, 35 plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415447

**SIMON** 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, writing, puzzles, loopholes, ambiguity, WLTm very pretty, leggy female, 6ft plus, 40 plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415155

**PAUL** early 60's, fit, smart, GSOH, WLTm female for some casual times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415113

**ANDY** young 66, widower, honest, caring, affectionate, GSOH, looking for LTR with lady 60's, slim and likeminded. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415093

**JOHN** own business, blue eyes, dark hair, loving, caring, tactful, 5ft 10ins, own home, likes to wine and dine, come and meet me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414987

**LADY** companion wanted for older gent, good position in life, likes travel, property abroad etc. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414821

**MALE** seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703



**FEMININE** sensual female, slim-medium build

wanted by slim, kind male for daytime meets, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414809

**OUTGOING** male, seeking attractive female, likes sports, music, cinema and nights out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414793

**MALE** seeking Asian female, any age, outgoing, likes outdoors for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413965

**KEEN** cyclist 58, non-competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337

**RETIRED** engineer 67, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, seeking slim lady, 60-65, young at heart to wine/dine, friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413161

**RETIRED** male, seeks attractive female for friendship and fun, any age/status/colour. East Kent, can travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413133

**COMPANY** Director, mature, late 50's, seeking female, any age for mutually rewarding friendship, Kent/Surrey area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412819

**IAN** 5ft 11ins, likes rock/roll, singing, making people laugh, seeking someone special. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412799

**BARRY** divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717

**SINGLE** young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

**MALE** 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212

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## The 10th Monaco Historic Grand Prix & Portofino

by Rail • 9th & 10th May, 2016

8 days semi-all-inclusive, £1049pp • Quote: GP5-KOS

The bi-annual Monaco Historic Grand Prix, celebrating its 10th edition in 2016, is run on the famous Formula 1 course with rare and famous Grand Prix cars dating from the 1940s to 1980s. In contrast to its modern day counterpart, held two weeks later, the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique is far more relaxed, friendlier and accessible. You can get close to cars and drivers on a stroll through the paddock – definitely off limits at the F1 GP – and you'll have plenty of elbow room in the grandstand too – we include a seated ticket on final race day. You will also enjoy visits to Portofino and Dolceacqua.

**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout • Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras • Return rail travel from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Nice • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris or Lille outbound • 6 nights sharing a twin/double room in 3-star hotel in Diano Marina with buffet breakfasts & dinners and free drinks 6pm to 11pm every night • local brands of beer, wine & spirits • Grandstand seated ticket for Historic Grand Prix Race day • All Excursions • Transfers abroad



Free Drinks  
Champagne  
Check-in

Departures: 13 April, 30 May, 17 September, 1 October, 2015

## Riviera of Flowers, Monaco & Portofino by Rail

- afternoon departures - April to October, 2015  
8 days semi-all-inclusive, from £849pp • Quote: RF-KOS

This super holiday, taking in the French and Italian Riviéras, starts with a glass of bubbly at St Pancras' famous Champagne Bar before taking an afternoon Eurostar to Lille or Paris. After an overnight stay, we continue by TGV train to Nice then coach to Diano Marina. Enjoy free drinks every night at the hotel and excursions to Monaco, Eze, Portofino and Dolceacqua.

**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout • Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras • Return rail travel from St Pancras to Nice (from Ebbsfleet on request) • 1 night hotel B&B in Paris or Lille • 6 nights in Diano Marina or similar - half-board plus selected free drinks 6pm to 11pm every night • All Excursions • Transfers abroad



Free Drinks

## Rapallo, Portofino & Cinque Terre by Rail

- 6 June, 11, 17 & 29 September, 2015  
8 days semi-all-inclusive, from £899pp • Quote: RP-KOS

Liguria is certainly one of the most beautiful and popular regions in Italy. We stay in the seaside town of Rapallo, home to many affluent Italians and visit the world heritage Cinque Terre (Five Lands), the famous Tuscan cities of Pisa and Lucca; and idyllic Portofino by boat.

**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout • Return rail travel from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Nice • 1 night hotel B&B in Nice • 6 nights half-board accommodation in Rapallo with free drinks from 6pm to 10pm every night • All excursions • Transfers abroad



## Braemar Gathering & Highland Steam by Rail

- 3 September, 2015  
6 days half board, £689pp • Quote: GB9-KOS

Since 1848 the world-famous Braemar Gathering has been regularly attended by the reigning Monarch (as the Chieftain of the gathering) and members of the Royal Family. We will visit the gathering and tour the Trossachs - gateway to the Highlands; cruise on Loch Katrine and ride the Strathspey Steam Railway through gorgeous Highland scenery.

**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout from Kings Cross • Return rail travel from London Kings Cross, York or Newcastle to Pitlochry • 5 nights half-board • All coach travel & touring in Scotland • Loch Katrine Cruise • Ride on the Strathspey Railway • Entry to Braemar Gathering - seated in open stand  
**Note:** Attendance by the Queen and Prince Charles not guaranteed



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## Secret Citadelle to Christmas Markets River Cruise by Rail

- 24 November, 2015  
5 days semi-all-inclusive, from £529pp • Quote: TC11-1-KOS

Join us for a relaxing river cruise starting in the picturesque town of Dinant, located on the Meuse River and home to an impressive citadel. Sailing past scenic landscapes onto Namur, with its beautiful 17th and 18th-century architecture. We visit two exceptional Christmas Markets: Aachen in Germany, with a visit to the Lindt Chocolate Factory Outlet and Valkenburg in Holland, with its unique Christmas Caves. We also visit Brussels, the Belgian capital with its famous Christmas market and Grand Place.

**INCLUDED:** Escorted throughout • Return rail travel from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Brussels • 4 nights full board on the mps Princess sharing a twin outside rear cabin on Main Deck - upgrades available • Beer, wine, & soft drinks served at lunch & dinner and from 6pm to midnight at the bar • Entertainment • Transfers abroad



# Edinburgh eyes a race for play-offs

Gills boss hopes his team can keep performing consistently



**TURNAROUND:** Amid early season fears of relegation, now Justin Edinburgh wants promotion Pictures: ADY KERRY

## Football

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

GILLINGHAM manager Justin Edinburgh is getting bullish about the team's ambitions for this season - just a month after taking over the Priestfield reins.

Strong wins against archrivals Swindon and the MK Dons since he took charge on February 7 have led him to believe the Gills - who had started slipping down the table - are in the race for the play-offs.

Going into the weekend, the Gills were just four points shy of a play-off place in the Sky Bet League 1 table. The Gills gaffer said: "I think there's one place up for grabs. The other three will be taken by teams in there."

"There are probably 10 or 11 other teams which think they can take that spot."

"What we have to do is just concentrate on ourselves. First and foremost we guarantee ourselves a performance, and more times than not, the result will come with that."

Consistency, he insists, will be key to any eventual success.

He said: "I think we just have to focus on ourselves and trying to give consistent performances."

"We always want good form, and it's really just about maintaining that so we can finish as high up the table as possible."

Gills striker Cody McDonald was praised by the manager for what Edinburgh described as 'sublime' goals during the team's 3-0 away win at promotion chasing rivals Swindon.

He said: "They were exquisite finishes. The back heel was sublime,

what you call a natural goal scoring instinct."

It wasn't just McDonald that came in for praise, with the manager saying that the team's performance was their best so far.

He said: "The way we surrendered our unbeaten run was frustrating, so I was looking for a good response."

"By far and away it was our best performance in all aspects of the game."

With McDonald, and the rest of the team on board, Edinburgh says he's not likely to need any new players for a while, saying he wouldn't be looking to take any players on loan as he preferred to keep a 'tight squad'. With 11 games left in the season, Edinburgh says he is determined to finish the season with a chase to secure promotion to the Championship. He said: "We won't let this season fizzle out."

## Stevens takes stand against corruption threat

KENT County Cricket Club all-rounder Darren Stevens has joined the fight against sporting corruption after his future was threatened by an alleged suspicious approach.

The 38-year-old all-rounder's career hung briefly in the balance as he waited a report into an alleged suspicious approach he received while playing in the Bangladesh Premier League.

He says the experience he faced before being cleared by the Bangladesh Cricket Board after investigation, was brutal, and that he wants players to know that they must report any suspicious behaviour immediately.

He had been playing for the Dhaka Gladiators in the Bangladesh Premier League two years ago.

He was found innocent of any wrongdoing in February 2014.

He had been approached by the



**KENT:** County players will hear about Stevens' experiences

team's owner and asked if he would captain them during a match. However, Stevens was informed that an

other player would 'run the game on the pitch'. He turned the offer down, thinking nothing more about it until he was contacted by the ICC anti-corruption unit.

He said: "When I got two charges through, I wouldn't wish it on anybody, it was brutal."

"Because I didn't report at that time a suspicious act I have gone through hell over the last two years."

"In any of these tournaments anywhere around the world whatever tournament you are playing in if you do come across anything suspicious just report it immediately."

Stevens has now appeared in an instructional DVD, which is set to be shown to all county players before the start of the new domestic season as part of a new anti-corruption code.

## TV cameras at Welling after boss Brown sacked

STRUGGLING Conference club Welling United go into today's game against Altrincham with a caretaker manager after the unexpected sacking of Jody Brown.

The Wings board called time on Brown's tenure after just nine games in charge.

They said that Brown had failed to perform for the team, earning the squad just one point in his run as manager which saw eight defeats.

The board said that they had to act immediately to try and steer the club

away from the Vanarama Conference relegation zone.

After the sacking, the board announced it would put

long-serving defender Loui Fazakerley in charge of the Wings.

He will head up a caretaker management team for the foreseeable future.

The club's board has

urged supporters to get behind

Fazakerley and the rest of the team during today's

game, which kicks off at 1pm and will be televised by BT Sport.



**BYRNE:** The champion crashed out badly during testing

## Shakey Byrne breaks hand in test wobble

SHEPPEY based MCE Insurance British Superbike champion Shane 'Shakey' Byrne suffered a smash during pre-season testing of his bike at Almeria in Spain.

During the ride, the four-time champion suffered what he described as a 'heavy' crash in the final session of the day.

The champion rider was forced to undergo surgery after badly damaging his hand.

However, he was swift to assure his fans he will be ready for the defence of his crown.

Shakey said: "I've broken my left hand which resulted in an operation to fix it. One of my knuckles disappeared down into my hand and broke it. The good news is though, as there's no point in dwelling on it, I was operated on and with some screws and plates it's all been put back together so I'm already on the mend. I've got to keep this cast on for two to three weeks, but I'll see what my guy in the UK says and do absolutely everything I possibly can to be ready for testing in three weeks."

## Historic Open golf club decision

Royal St George's in Sandwich has decided to end its 128 year old rule banning female members.

The famous golf club, which has hosted the Open 14 times - most recently in 2011 - decided to lift the ban after putting it to a club vote.

Amid mounting pressure, the club was one of just three on the Open rota which had decided to retain a

men only membership policy.

The vote saw a decisive 90 per cent of members voting in favour of altering the membership rules to enable women to join with immediate effect.

The club released a statement saying that it was looking forward to welcoming ladies as junior and full members.

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